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PGP: Odyssey of an **Encryption Program**

Cyber Pundits: Reflecting the **True Spirit** of the Internet?

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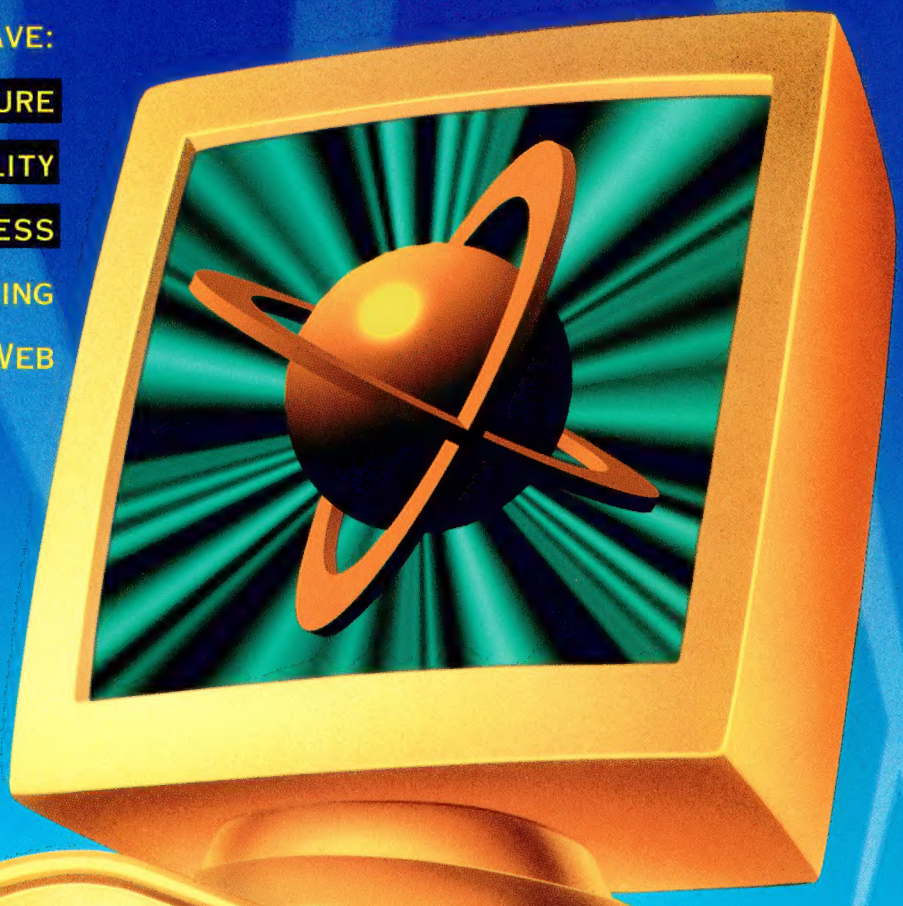

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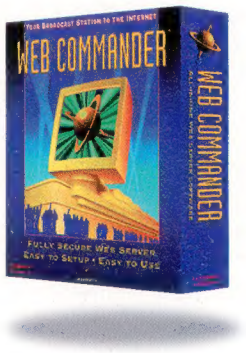

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the net
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Build a (Better) Web Page

The tools are out there. All you need is a dash of creativity and some insiders' tricks, and you, too, can get your Webbed feet wet. We'll show you how.

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page 5 **netPOWER CD-ROM**

Instructions for Use

This month, we've put together a detailed list of instructions on everything you'll need to know to use our CD-ROM.

- On the disc, you'll find tools to help you create your own Web site: **Home Page Template, Clip Art Collection, HTML Editors, Graphic Utilities**

PLUS: Cruise the this month's best Web sites off-line

1000+ HYPERLINKS!
netPOWER 04 96
Create Your Own
WEB PAGE Today:
Tools are for Windows 3.x, Windows 95, and Macintosh.
Home Page Template
Clip Art Collection
HTML Editors
Graphic Utilities
PLUS
The Net's Sites of the Month: Surf the best sites of the Web off-line!

a word from the editor

Welcome to *The Net* in April

When you were a kid, did you fantasize about the biography "they" would write about you when you became rich and famous, or powerful and influential? Did you ever wonder where they'd get all the info about you? Maybe from those old elementary school papers you made your mom save.

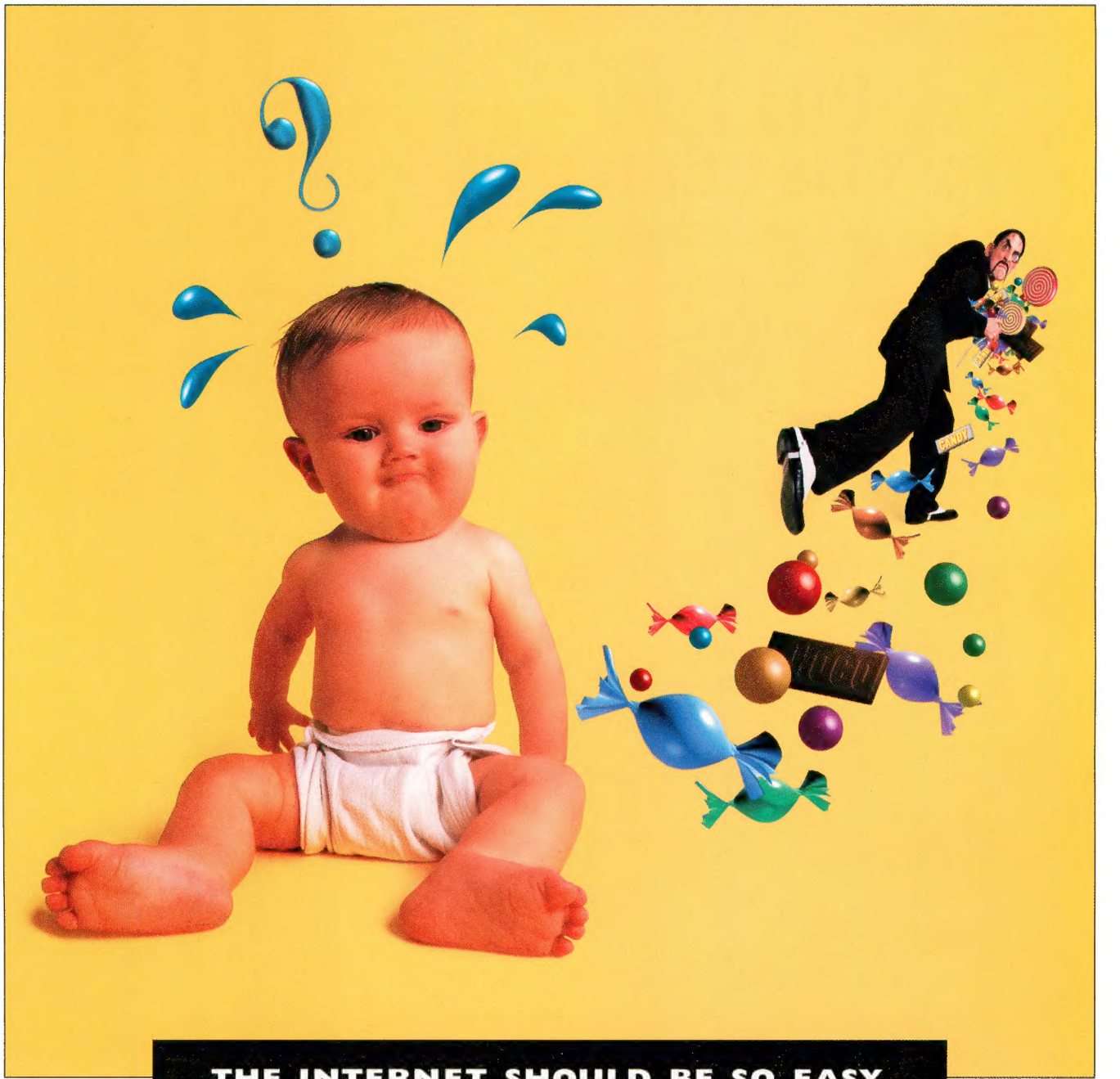
Well, these days you don't have to wait for someone to come along and chronicle your life. The ability to do it yourself — via a home page of your own — is just a mouse click away, on the Web. All you need to do is get started. And this month, that's exactly what we want you to do.

We've put together a giant "How-To" feature that aims to set you on the journey toward creating your ultimate home page. We know there are lots of options to choose from for how to get your page up, and we want to help you sift through them. Don't want to even think about dealing with arcane HTML code? No problem. The three major online services offer Web page design services; yeah, your page won't necessarily look very unique, but at least you'll have a starting point. We also offer pointers on what to look for if you decide to use an Internet Service Provider to host your home page. And while we don't usually advocate "stealing," we'd love it if you'd "borrow" the HTML code editor Crystal Waters used to create her home page.

Be sure to check out our spicy tips section, where top Web designers provide design tactics and hints. And don't miss our guide on how to get your Web site indexed — the raison d'etre for Web site creation.

Want to see what others before you have done? The Blue Pages, our directory of Web sites, gather together some of the latest, most dazzling examples of digital design and content. And we'd love to check out your site when you're done. Send us your URL (**blue@thenet-usa.com**). We can't wait to hear from you.

Linda Sandler



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netPOWER

A disc to give you an edge online
April 1996

Creating Your Own Web Page is Easier With netPower

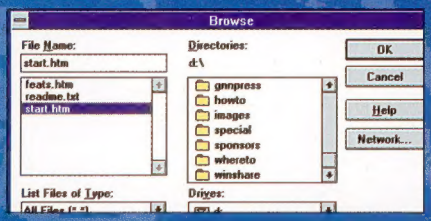
In keeping with *The Net's* focus this month on how to build a home page of your own, netPOWER, our covermount CD-ROM, gives you the tools to create your own Web page. With a collection of everything from some of the best HTML editors to a great collection of clip art, netPOWER gives you the stuff you need to make your Web page come to life, right now.

HOW TO USE THE DISC:

To get to the Sites of the Month, Sitings, Archived Resources, Hyperlinks, and Starter Kit:

Windows:

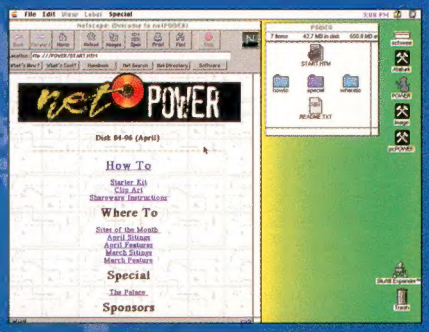
1. Put the netPOWER disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Open your Web browser.
3. Choose "Open local" or "Open file" from the File menu. (Note: If you are a Pipeline NY customer, you will need to use a different browser, as Pipeline's browser does not allow you to open local files.)



4. Choose "D:\START.HTM" (assuming D: is your CD drive). Be sure that the open dialog says "show.htm files" if you're using a browser from an online service.
5. If you cannot locate the START.HTM file, make sure that under "files of type" you have selected all files (*.*).

Macintosh:

1. Put the netPOWER disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Open your Web browser.
3. Choose "Open local" or "Open file" from the file menu.
4. Click on the desktop button, open "netPOWER," and then open "START.HTM."
5. Alternatively, you can drag the START.HTM file on top of your browser's icon to open it.



To Access all Other Files on netPOWER:

Windows 95:

1. Insert the netPOWER disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Under the "Start" button, select "Run."
3. In the "Run" window select "Browse", and look in "D" (assuming that "D" is the letter of your CD-ROM drive). Under "Files of type" select "All files (*.*)"

Windows 3.x:

1. Insert the netPOWER disc into your CD-ROM drive.
2. Go to the Program Manager window, choose "Run" and select "Browse" from your "D" drive (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
3. Under "Files of type" select "All files (*.*)"

Macintosh:

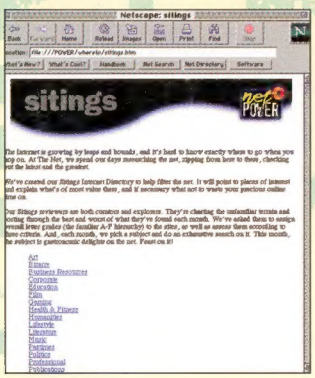
1. Insert the CD into your CD-ROM drive, and look on your desktop for the netPOWER window, which contains the folders for shareware, advertising, and clip art.

CONTENTS OF netPOWER:

Hyperlinks Galore

A Convenient Resource on Disc

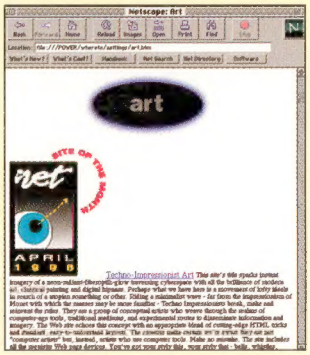
As you read through this issue, you'll see hundreds of Web site addresses listed. netPOWER lets you avoid the frustration of retyping those cumbersome URLs. Whether you're interested in pursuing sites highlighted in our feature well, the Blue Pages, or content from back issues of *The Net*, netPOWER gives you immediate access to all the URLs from the pages of the magazine, conveniently hyperlinked for the easiest of Web surfing.



Mirrored Web Sites

netPOWER takes some of the best sites on the Web from our Sites of the Month and mirrors parts of them on the disc. That means that we've stored locally on this CD-ROM the Web pages you would see if you were cruising the Internet and had accessed the particular site. (picture6—cut out mac stuff—just focus on netscape) netPOWER lets you easily access these sites offline, and at lightning-fast speed. To see these sites, you'll need to use your Web browser.

(Note: America Online users cannot use the AOL browser while offline).



This month's mirrored sites:

ART: Techno-Impressionist Art
http://www.tlc-systems.com/techno/index.html

HUMANITIES: Nothingness.org
http://www.nothingness.org/

LITERATURE: Bookwire
http://www.bookwire.com/

PUBLICATIONS: Welcome to Tripod
http://www.tripod.com/

RELIGION: Roots & Culture
http://www.escape.com/~rastaman/Roots.html

VANITY: First Brian of 96
http://streams.com:80/brian/

Shareware

This month, netPOWER has some great HTML editors for Web site authoring. All shareware is stored in the "winshare" folder for Windows users, and the howto:SHAREWARE for Mac users. Please note: YOU CANNOT LAUNCH SHAREWARE FROM THE HTML PAGES OF netPOWER. You can, however, read about each program and launch to the specific Web sites of each manufacturer.
Here's a partial list of shareware on the disc:

Cross-Platform

In the hmfree folder
HoTMetal (free)
http://www.sq.com/
HoTMetaL FREE includes the latest HTML 3.0 Extensions, and the WYSIWYG Tables Insert will automatically generate tables and let you edit them right in your document as you would in a word processor.

For Windows:

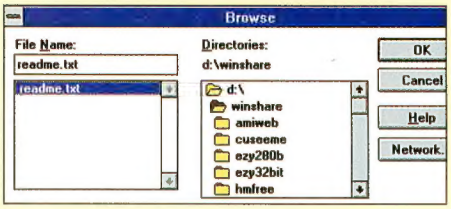
In the htmlasst folder
HTML Assistant
http://fox.nstn.ca/~harawitz/index.html
HTML Assistant is a hypertext editor that incorporates features that can help you organize and keep track of the Internet resources that you use.

In the livemark folder
Live Markup
http://www.mediatec.com/
Live Markup is a Microsoft-Windows HTML Editor that offers a graphical What-You-See-Is What-You-Get (WYSIWYG) layout environment for building or editing Web pages.

In the skisoft folder
Web Publisher 1.1
http://www.skisoft.com
This fully functional version of Web Publisher 1.1 is available for you to evaluate for 30 days, so you can see whether it provides the power and functions you need to automate the creation and maintenance of your Web site.

In the webedit folder
WebEdit
http://www.nesbitt.com/
This Windows-based HTML text editor includes support for every feature of every version of the HTML specification, from HTML version 1 through the current draft specification for HTML version 3 (a.k.a. HTML+), including optional features and special non-standard extensions supported by browsers such as Netscape.

In the wpt51d10 folder
WPTOHTML 1.00
This is a macro that converts WordPerfect 5.1/6.0 for DOS documents to HTML. Unlike many editing tools, this macro allows individuals with no knowledge of HTML to create full-featured documents in a familiar WYSIWYG environment.



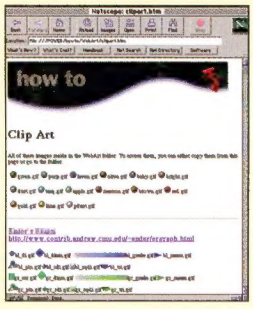
For Macintosh

BBEdit Lite
http://www.tiac.net/biz/bbsw/
This is the freeware "cousin" of BBEdit, the popular and critically acclaimed text editor. BBEdit is a high-performance text editor, which is ideally suited for programming, telecommunications or cross-platform tasks, and HTML or text content composition.

NOTE: Licensing information for shareware is included with each program, and when you use it, you accept the responsibility to adhere to that license and restrictions. netPOWER claims no interest in the copyrighted programs of the individual authors. You are NOT purchasing usage rights to this software with netPOWER. To obtain usage rights you must register with the developer identified in each program. After you check it out, we strongly urge you to register your software with the respective author.

OTHER THINGS TO DO ON THIS DISC:

Clip Art



You can access a variety of clip art — including bullets, arrows, and background tiles —from either the netPOWER HTML that you view with your browser, or the "WebArt" folder. Using Netscape, within the HTML section of netPOWER you can hold down-click with your mouse to choose to "Save This Image." Choose a location and you'll have your graphic. Otherwise, go to the WebArt folder for all of the graphics in one convenient location.

The Lava Lounge and The Palace

The Lava Lounge is *The Net's* graphical chat area that you can visit and participate in on our Web site **(http://www.thenet-usa.com).** And....
The last Tuesday of each month, Blue Grrrl hits the Web for a Grrrls Night Out. Girls of all ages (5 to Grandma) are invited to visit *The Net's* Lava Lounge to hang out, chat about issues, and help each other find women's and girl's resources online. The show starts at 5 PST and goes until 6:30 PST. If you're really good, they might round up a few special guest stars!

Sure, you can download the software yourself **(http://www.thepalace. com/),** or skip the hassle by installing the Palace software you need from netPOWER in the D:\special\palace\ directory (that's netPOWER:special:palace: for you Mac folk).

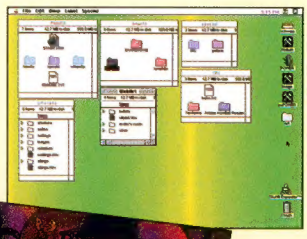
Here's how to get there once you've inserted the CD into you CD-ROM drive:

Windows

1. Windows 95 users go to the "Start" button and select "Run." Windows 3.x users go to the Program Manager window, choose (screen1.bmp) "Run" and select "Browse" from your "D" drive (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
2. In the "Run" window select "Browse", and look in "D" (assuming that "D" is the letter of your CD-ROM drive).
3. Open the folder called "special" within which you'll find a folder called "palace."
4. Open the palace folder and double-click on "PFull110.exe"

Macintosh

1. Open the folder called "special"
2. You'll see a folder called "palace"
3. Open the palace folder and double-click on the Palace installer.



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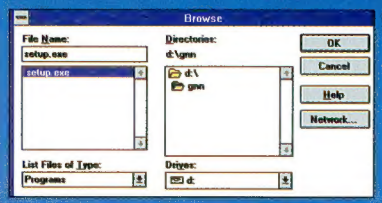

1. Insert this CD in your CD-ROM drive (D or E).
2. Select Run from the file menu of your Windowsx Program Manager, type D:\GNN\SETUP (or E:\SETUP), and click on OK to install the GNN software and register for the GNN service.
3. Then, follow the simple, step-by-step instructions on your screen, and when prompted, enter the registration number and password found on the insert that came inside the CD-ROM sleeve.

Windows 95 users replace Step 2 above as follows: Click on the Start button on the Windows '95 Task Bar and select Run, type D:\GNN\SETUP (or E:\SETUP), and click on OK to install the GNN software and register for the GNN service.

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The Net Heats Up

I don't know if this is just coincidence or what, but my "Man of the Year" issue of *Time*, with Uncle Newtie's mug emblazoned across the cover arrived in pristine condition. My February issue of *The Net*, however, with the headline, "Sex Online," looks as though the entire population of Des Moines has thumbed through it. I guess this puts an end to the old joke about postal employees being illiterate?

M.G. Smith

Congratulations. Someone has finally written an article on sex and the Internet. It amazes me that there is so much sex on the net, yet anyone responsible is afraid to write about it. Yes, you have broken the barrier and, as an established magazine, have admitted that sex does exist on the net.

Thanks to you, I hope people (and other net magazine editors) realize that, as sex is part of our daily lives (for the better or worse), it will be also part of the daily activities of the Internet.

TSMTravel@aol.com

Your February 1996 issue had an interesting effect on me. I took it out of my mailbox and at first thought I'd received someone else's *Hustler* magazine. Nope. Looking closer, I found it really was a magazine that purported to relate to net surfers, including 40 pages of drivel and "how-to-finds" re: porno on the net. Thanks. No.

I really don't think I need a mag which apparently is devoted to making Sen. Exon & Co. happier. (Madder? At least your cover and some of your content gave them more ammunition.) Good grief, don't we have enough grief to deal with now? Adding gasoline to the D.C. fire ain't gonna help, I think.

Jerry Tompkins

As sex is part of our daily lives (for the better or worse), it will be also part of the daily activities of the Internet.

Sex online! A subject near and dear to me, as the creator of several adult Web sites. With "SEX Online" pasted on the cover, it happily joined other mags in a brown paper bag. While your 16 pages of "Sex Online" provided great articles from eight hard-working writers, missing was any depth, or the URLs of hugely popular commercial Websex sites.

Some such Websex sites get 20 million hits a month, are new ventures not connected to any traditional sex business, such as old *Playboy* or *Hustler*, and employ lots of people who create great Web spaces.

Surely an article should have been done on adult link sites, such as Don's World — Adult Resources (**http://www.indirect.com/www/donald/adult.html**). This and other adult jump sites provide an up-to-date, ever-growing resource for sex on the Web, listing commercial, noncommercial, personal, newsgroups, special interest, and fetish links, etc.

Bobby Gold

Networking Snafu

In your article in the March issue (pages 42-43), you mention resources for women by women, but then the list in the box features several examples of: a) resources created by men or large corporations (not women); and b) examples of what *not* to do when creating resources for women.

You also failed to mention a major resource designed to help women network with one another: the Cybergrrl Webstation (**http://www.cybergrrl.com**), which has hundreds of pages and links for women, and which has been on the Web twice as long as most of the other resources you mentioned.

In the "Five Ways to Network" sidebar, you mention Lycos and Yahoo but fail to mention FeMiNa, the *only* searchable database on the Web for women. Nor is FeMiNa (**http://www.femina.com**) mentioned in the Networking with Other Women Online section. FeMiNa has more links for women than *any* other Web page and a better-organized database of women-sites than *any* search engine. In the "Women Online: They're Not Shopping" sidebar, you omitted information on how to find out more about the Cybergrrl Internet Media Survey of Online Women — **http://www.femina.com/results.html**. Updated results of the CGIM survey of women online are being posted every few months, and over 4,500 women have responded so far, making this survey larger than any other of its kind.

Grrrltalk

E-Mail in Every Pot

I am no analog Luddite, but I certainly oppose Rand's and Al Gore's government-mandated, tax supported e-mail schemes (March 96, page 13). Let the information have-nots eat cake.

Lt. Col. Joe Johnson

Browser Battles

The article comparing different browsers (January issue, pages 66-71) was sorely lacking, since IBM's WebExplorer was not included. I'm not sure of all the capabilities, but I know that V1.03 supports the background patterns and tables.

Shannon Wheeler

Neophyte Help

I read with interest the plea for help in the February 1996 issue (page 10). I've been hosting a section for beginners on my site, NETLiNkS! (**http://www.interlog.com/~csteele/newbie.html**), for the last 11 months. The subsection which might be

Red in the Face

In our February article on sex channels, we listed a number of channels that do not consider themselves "general sex channels": We apologize to the participants of these channels, and regret our error.

#BBW
#hottub
#truthdare

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of interest to that reader and any other beginners out there is called the Newbie Help Link. It's the ultimate resource page for beginners on the Internet. We cover a wide spectrum of information that's vital to anyone navigating around the Internet for the first time. Highlights include complete reading resources for online tips, tutorials and FAQs, recommended mailing lists and newsgroups, a completely updated listing to search engines on the Web, a complete list of Web browsers by platform, and links to software archives for obtaining that hard-to-find piece of software. Last but not least, we include information on statistics, surveys, and facts about the Internet.

Chris Steele

Education Revolution

The explosion in the number of K12 schools that have developed some sort of Web or net presence is staggering. The Web site I have created with my students attempts to demonstrate how the Internet, specifically the World Wide Web, can be a forum for student creativity as well as an arena for information exchange and critique. If one tours the pages of our site at **http://www.fred.net/nhhs/nhhs.html**, I believe the value of the Internet as a teaching tool will become evident to both the believer and the skeptic alike.

The battle that I and other online educators fight every day is one of funding and access. Our site is connected to a 386 16 Mhz with a 62 MB hard drive that is about to die. The entire school has three machines with modems, which leads to a lack of access for teachers and students, which in turn results in teacher technophobia and unfamiliarity with the potential of the technology. To raise funds, we have turned to the business community to buy Web space on our site.

I hope you'll take a look at the Web site and give it the attention it deserves in your publication. The attention and resulting traffic the school's site will receive can only lead to good things for the teachers and students who could access the net and learn from its offerings.

George Cassutto

More: Online Services vs. ISPs

I currently have both AOL and a dial-up PPP account. When I first got my computer, I put in one of those AOL discs, and within an hour, I was online. When I got a dial-up Internet Service Provider, it took about one week of phone calls back and forth to get online. Even now, I have trouble getting through and frequently can't get on the network. With AOL, *not once* have I had trouble getting connected. As far as chat groups go, I was able to pick up all the cool features of AOL chat in about one afternoon, while I'm still trying to figure out mIRC.

And when it comes to bad behavior, Internet geeks are just as bad if not worse than most AOL users.

Brendan Gray

AOL *would* be a nice system, for it's set up rather well, but it only has pseudo-Internet access. True AOL users would not use AOL anymore if they had a better Internet service. The major online systems — CompuServe, Prodigy, AOL, etc. — do *not* have the best deals. And, as we all know, there is no privacy. The LOCAL Internet access is the way to go. My Internet provider is $10 a month, unlimited everything, including a whole week of for new users. Give my provider, the Blue Moon Online System, a call (716 447 5600; telnet: bbs.bluemoon.net).

Ken Dietz

Review of Emusic

I was shocked at the irresponsible and unsupported review of the Emusic site by *The Net* (February 96, page 30). In the review, Emusic was compared side-by-side with CD Now!, and despite the fact that even the slightest investigation would have revealed that the prices at Emusic are substantially lower than the prices of CD Now!, the review wrongfully made a misrepresentation that our prices were higher. In fact, the reviewer used the word "inexcusable" in describing the falsely reported higher prices.

The true facts are that Emusic's prices beat the prices of CD Now! hands down, and that our speed and efficiency are unmatched. An analysis of 25 randomly selected CD titles in various styles with a spreadsheet analysis of the various prices shows this. The comparison overwhelmingly provides evidence that Emusic's prices are much lower than those of CD Now!, leading to the inevitable conclusion that the facts, as reported by your magazine, are false.

For objective tests of our speed, selection and price: Go to Bargain Finder in Netscape's What's Cool section, or actually compare prices and the time it takes to browse and order on various music sites.

Not only are our CD prices lower, but our shipping and handling is $1.99 for the first CD and $.49 thereafter. CD Now! charges $2.49 for shipping and handling on the first CD and $.49 thereafter. Music Blvd. charges $2.99 for the first CD, $3.99 for 2 CDs, and $4.99 for three to five CDs. Is your reviewer so lazy and irresponsible that he forgot about shipping and handling?

With regard to the comment that our selection is inexcusably low, you must have ignored the fact that we have more than 100,000 CD titles. Also, we are accused of having inferior graphics. Because many busy people use the Web for convenience and as a time-saving tool, Emusic made a conscious decision to build a site that is super-fast and efficient, which means eliminating unnecessary graphics, "eye candy," and screens that would cause delay to our customers. Rather than praising the speed, efficiency, and ease of use of Emusic, *The Net* seems to have a preference for multiple, slow-loading screens and unnecessary graphics.

Mark S. Chasan, CEO
EMusic

An Editorial Response: After receiving your letter, we went back and did our own comparison of prices. We found we had indeed been inaccurate — both in terms of initial costs of CDs and shipping and handling fees — in stating that EMusic has higher prices than CDNow. For example, Hootie & the Blowfish's *Cracked Rearview Mirror* costs $13.65 on Emusic and $15.36 on CD Now!. With shipping and handling, the price comes out to $15.66 on EMusic and $17.85 on CDNow, a price difference of $2.19. In defense of our statement regarding inferior graphics, we do acknowledge that we consider aesthetics to be relevant in a Web site review. But we also recognize that a number of sites, such as EMusic, have consciously decided that lots of graphics conflict with their mission (in this case, to sell CDs). We regret the error, and we extend an apology to EMusic. Check it out for yourself (**http://www. emusic.com/**)

BEST SIGS THIS MONTH:

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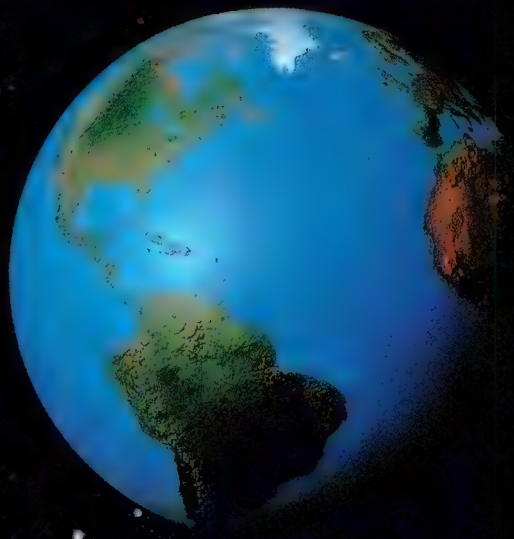
— Dr. Norman V. Peale
thanks to Kimberley deGroot Meier

"What Mad Max was to the black top roads, I am to the cyber roads."
thanks to The Net Warrior

"Live and let live...."
thanks to Sophia Graham

"The greatest flight man can take into ignorance is the search for knowledge."
thanks to Chris Steele ■



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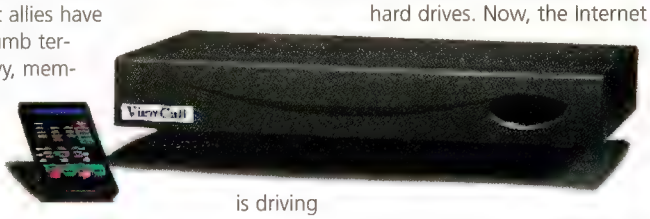
hardware news

Set-Top Mania Spells Doom For Local Storage

The more things change, the more they stay the same. A cliché, indeed, but it concisely describes computer trends: Our handy electronic allies have evolved from dumb terminals into heavy, memory-packed machines, and now, it seems, they're on their way back to dumb terminals — the "set-top boxes" about which we've all been hearing so much.



The companies creating the set-top boxes claim the new wave of machines are "client-server intelligent machines," not dumb terminals. These appliance-like computers, which will employ standard TV sets as monitors, promise Internet connectivity, word processor functionality, and costs of less than $1,000 (most will boast prices in the $500 range, if the companies are to be believed).

The companies designing and manufacturing these Information Age panaceas are wagering that the Internet will become the platform for most computer needs — database management, communication, document creation and layout, and software distribution. If you have one of these boxes, you won't be storing programs on your local hard drive. Instead, you'll simply download programs from the Internet (and flush them from your system when you're done), or work off of the net directly.

Sun Microsystems dreamed up this idea long ago (as did Nintendo and Sony with gaming machines that sported mysterious, undocumented computer ports), but Sun abandoned its efforts in order to ride the wave of power processors and gigabyte hard drives. Now, the Internet is driving manufacturers back to the "set-top model" — it's cheaper and promises to be just as useful. Leading the pack is Oracle, champion of "intelligent clients for the age of network computing." Oracle says its Network Computer will be a low-cost solution meeting the needs of today's and tomorrow's Internet-based technologies. Oracle recognizes that most people use their computers primarily to read and write documents, send e-mail, browse databases, and fill out forms. It seems a bit excessive, the company argues, to use a 100mhz Pentium when the Internet could be used to store data, which would then be retrieved by the snappy little boxes at a fraction of the cost.

Contacts:

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http://www.AMIGA.de/

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http://www.pippin.apple.com/

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http://www.sel.sony.com

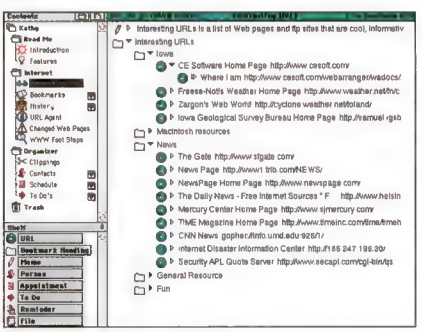
ViewCall
770 729 2929
http://www.viewcallamerica.com/

Other players in this emerging market include Sony Electronics; Be, Inc.; ViewCall America; IBM; Apple; and Amiga. All are racing to get set-top boxes to market. Look out. If the Internet is the next platform for computer applications, who's going to need Windows97 or MacOS 8.0?

peripherali

WebWhacker Whacks ISP Bills, Too

Browsing the Web? Then you've probably encountered the hazard of trying to manage your bookmarks, or "hot list" of Web sites you really like and want to return to. Most of us "Add Bookmark" till we end up with long, unwieldy lists of inscrutable titles. While browser vendors are attempting to remedy the problem, a variety of third-party solutions are making their way to market. Macintosh-only WebArranger from CE Software (http://www. cesoft.com) stores and organizes not only Web addresses, but also URLs from other Internet protocols, such as Gopher, e-mail, and newsgroups. Clicking on an address opens the URL in the appropriate client software.



As with any PIM, you have to actually use WebArranger for it to keep you organized.

But wait! There's more! WebArranger is not just a bookmark organizer. It's a full-fledged PIM (Personal Information Manager), with support for contacts, to-do lists, and calendars. You can store e-mail and Web addresses along with contacts. And, if that's not help enough, you can copy pictures into WebArranger to jog your memory. The program will also check Web pages to see if content has changed, and will notify you if it has. Web Arranger is now bundled with WebWhacker (reviewed in *The Net*'s January issue), a tool that lets you pull content directly from the Web and localize it on your hard drive. Pricing was not available at press time.

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net profile

Joel Furr, Master of Newsgroups

If you spend any time reading Usenet newsgroups, you're eventually going to stumble across a reference to Joel Furr. That's because Joel is a creator and moderator of newsgroups. He says he's created more alt.* hierarchy groups than anyone else. Joel began accessing Usenet newsgroups while he was at Virginia Tech from 1988 to 1993.

He became involved in a bit of Usenet history when he had T-shirts made up as a satire of Canter & Siegel (the lawyers who deluged the Internet with advertising, then were severely flamed). It said "Green Card Lawyers: Spamming the Globe." *The Net* talked to Joel about his introduction to the Internet, and his take on how the net has changed over the years.

Joel's current newsgroup activities:

- maintains FAQ for alt.fan.lemurs
- created and moderates alt.folklore.suburban
- moderates news.admin.net-abuse.announce

Joel proposed and founded:

- soc.history.war.word-war-ii
- soc.history.war.misc
- news.groups.reviews
- news.groups.questions
- rec.food.drink.tea
- rec.games.playing-cards

***Net**: How did you get introduced to the Internet?*

JF: I accessed a campus-wide bulletin board system at Virginia Tech called VTCOSY.

Various users at that system referred to the net, and I finally worked out how I could use campus systems to Telnet to a free account at Nyx.

***Net**: What do you think of the advent of the Web?*

JF: I think the Web is the equivalent, in many cases, of shovelware... garbage shoveled onto the Web because, hey, you've got the room in your account and you don't have anything else to put up. My own Web page (**http://www.danger.com/ jfhome.html**) is a perfect example of how useless most of the information on the Web really is.

Net: *Where do you stand on issues of free speech on the Internet?*

JF: Free speech on the Internet is an issue I'm rather tired of hearing about. Certainly, I support the freedom to speak one's mind online, and to do so free of governmental restrictions, [but] all too often, idiots online claim that freedom of speech doesn't just mean having the freedom to say what you want but also must include the right to *make* others read what you have to say.

Net: *What do you think of CompuServe's closing down newsgroups alleged to contain sexually explicit material at the behest of the German government?*

JF: I tend to think that the die-hard readers of the sex newsgroups are fairly pathetic wackos, having met some of the alt.sex aficionados in public in the last years.

I support their right to act like they're swinging, macho sex-gods, but given that many of them weigh 300-plus pounds and don't bathe, I hope one day they'll realize that there's no substitute for the real thing.

Be that as it may, I support the right of people to be pathetic losers if they want; if they want to read alt.sex, let them.

Net: *Based on the newsgroups you monitor, what do you think is the most important or interesting issue being discussed?*

JF: Cabbage.

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net acquisition

Online Services: Evolve or Die!

We've tended to rag a lot on online services, but this month we extend a click of our mouse to them. They've finally realized that the Internet Service Provider (ISP) model, which basically let users get whatever they want from the Web for a minimal monthly fee, is rapidly eclipsing the online service model, in which subscribers are charged for infotainment. Many of the content providers on the online services now duplicate their efforts, paying for a Web presence while maintaining their online service presence. They're also nipping at each others' heels to become major players on the Internet.

Microsoft has grabbed the lead in evolving from a strictly commercial online service as its repositions the Microsoft Network (MSN) as an Internet service that will host content on the Web. MSN (**http://www.msn.com/**) now provides a configurable Web page to any Web user (**http://www.msn.com/chp/opagev1.dll/_CHOICE.htx?**). This lets people create a "starting-point" page containing such elements as search engines, news topics, and specific URLs. Most of MSN's resources are now also available to anyone browsing the Web.MSN's philosophy is that it will increase the amount of traffic for its content providers. In addition, Microsoft's snagging of Vermeer Technologies will let it incorporate Vermeer's outstanding Web authoring tool, Front Page (**http://www.microsoft.com/msoffice/frontpage/intro.htm**), into its home and office software suites. This could be Microsoft's most valuable acquisition to date in its quest to unleash a strong Internet strategy.

America Online, meanwhile, is also making some effort to open up, although it's taking less dramatic steps than MSN. Its purchase of the Global Network Navigator (GNN) last year gave it a major Web resource and a good place from which to start off subscribers when they venture out onto the Web.

And AOL has made substantial efforts to compete with ISPs in the area of Internet access through a bid to license Netscape's Navigator browser. This will let AOL provide its subscribers with a decent Web browser, as well as Winsock support so Windows users won't have to use AOL utilities for Internet activity.

America Online
CompuServe
Microsoft Network
msn.
Online Services Are Evolving: A Brief Timeline
nov 94
dec
jan
feb
Acquires two Internet companies: BookLink Technologies (creator of InternetWork, a browser for the Web) and NaviSoft (developer of software and services designed to help companies develop interactive content)
mar 95
Acquires SPRY, maker of a Web browser
apr 95
Introduces a direct Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP) connection to the Internet, giving subscribers major net access unrestricted by platform, as well as lower pricing
may 95
Acquires multimedia and Internet publishing and production companies Medior and WAIS
jun 95
Unveils plan to offer standalone net service, via acquisitions of Global Network Navigator (GNN) and the WebCrawler search tool and Internet index.
july
Lets members publish their own personal pages on the Web
aug
AOL company NaviSoft announces industry's first client/server solution for Web publishing that lets users create, publish, and manage content on the Web
Sept 95
Macromedia and Navisoft partner to deliver tools that bring interactive multimedia to the Web
oct 95
Partners with Inconext and Quarterdeck to let members author pages on the Web
Partners with SurfWatch Software (which develops software to help parents monitor online content their children see) to develop Internet to a Box for Kids
nov 95
With its partner Bertelsmann AG, forms international alliance with Deutsche Telekom
With Bertelsmann AG, launches online service in Germany
Partners with MCI to include video conferencing service support with Windows products
dec 95
With Vocaltec, GNN provides Internet phone to its members for free
Allows members to use Internet Web browser of their choice
Licenses Microsoft's popular World Wide Web browser, Internet Explorer
Joins forces with NetWalk, a builder of home pages on the Web
Licenses its Web browser technology to CompuServe
Partners with NBC to bring interactive cable news to the Web
Allies with Oracle to collaborate on new Internet technologies
Licenses Sun's Java, an Internet-ready, object-oriented program language
Allies with Spyglass to collaborate on cross-platform Internet technologies
Signs license and joint development agreement with NetManage
jan 96
Acquires Vermeer Technologies to incorporate FrontPage Web authoring tool into Windows products
Tuesday
27

WHAT YOU GONNA PUT ON YOUR WEB PAGE?

Custom paint jobs, man. I'm Rembrandt with an airbrush. I've been beautifying Fat Boys for 15 years. The Japanese go nuts for my stuff.

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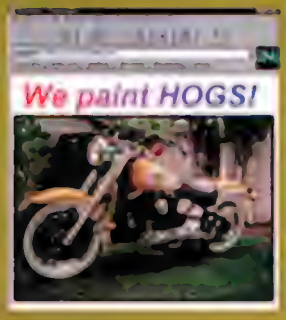

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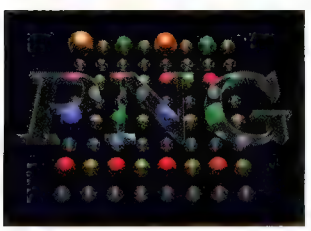
JUST BUILD IT.

web design

Whither GIF? A New Graphics Format Vies For Top Seed

There's a new graphics file format in town, and if it dazzles Web designers like many expect it to, GIFs may fall down and die like 8-track tapes and Crystal Pepsi. It's called PNG — as in, "Ping! Wow that loads quickly." — and officially stands for "Portable Network Graphics." PNG offers 10 to 30 percent better compression than GIF, and supports 24-bit images for 16.7 million colors of kaleidoscopic fun. In contrast, GIF files are limited to 8 bits for 256 colors. PNG also provides a much better transparency scheme: It supports masks with up to 256 levels of transparency, meaning that soft edges and drop shadows will integrate better with Web page backgrounds. GIFs, by comparison, are limited to single-color masks.



What is most revolutionary about PNG is that it supports gamma information, which provides images with true-to-original brightness and contrast. Moreover, PNG's interlacing is faster and superior to GIF's, and it is non-patented. (GIF's creator, Unisys, filed a patent on its LZW compression method, and is attempting to charge royalties to companies like Netscape, whose browser program implements the GIF format). Free reference specs for PNG are published in full on the Web (**http://www.boutell.com/boutell/png/**).

There is no other graphics format, even in the high-res pulp-and-paper world, that can offers so much, yet still allows for images small enough to display over slow modems.

Indeed. It looks like we're finally lucky enough to have a graphics format that was invented by someone who understands and respects the needs of Web designers. PNG's author, Thomas Boutell (**http://www.boutell.com/**), wrote MapEdit, a freeware image map editing package (**http://www.boutell.com/mapedit/**), and maintains the World Wide Web FAQ. He also has a site that houses CGIs, a free birthday database, and vegan dessert recipes. For additional information on saving PNG files, and PNG browser support, check out Greg Roelofs' Web site (**http://quest. jpl. nasa.gov/PNG/**).

As with any new product, PNG is a good news-bad news proposition. The good news: Many image editors and file conversion programs support PNG.

The bad news: Netscape isn't promising to support PNG as a native file format, so its support will be reliant on OS-specific plug-ins.

Stop the Hate: An Appeal to the Net

In a move that met with divided opinion on the Internet, the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC, at http://www.wiesenthal.com/) in Los Angeles began sending out letters to Internet Service Providers asking them to bar subscribers from posting or publishing hate speech over their networks. The letters urge ISPs to adopt acceptable-use policies (America Online's Terms of Service agreement is touted as a model), and to cancel the memberships of violators of these policies.

Mirroring Senator Exon's tactics in his anti-cyberporn crusade, Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the SWC appeared before Congress last year with a large collection of racist and hate material he said he'd downloaded from the Internet. Cooper is trying to get Congress to hold hearings about racist speech on the Internet, and to consider whether the Federal Communications Commission (http://www.fcc.gov/) should step in and try to stop it. While governmental interference with a group's right to publish any material would raise serious First Amendment issues, Cooper notes that an ISP is not bound to transmit any and all material. According to Cooper's letter: "We are simply asking those who are in the business of selling Internet presence and information services to do the right thing, and tell such (racist/hate) groups to take their money elsewhere."

Commenting on CSW's action, Kenneth McVay, creator of the Nizkor Project: An Electronic Holocaust Educational Resource (http://www.almanac.bc.ca/), said on the newsgroup alt.censorship: "I do not agree with the Wiesenthal Center's approach." He added: "The most effective means of fighting hatred is to expose it, and provide an alternative, contrasting view."

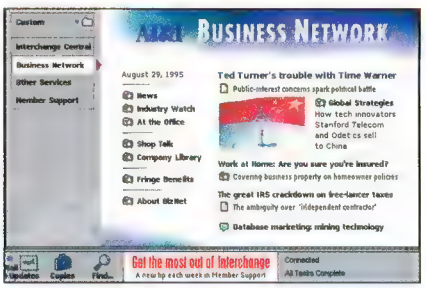
odds & ends

The Web: AT&T's New Best Friend

Smart vendors take their businesses online. That used to mean virtual storefronts for little Mom-and-Pops, but now Fortune 500 companies are going virtual too — and nothing reaches the whole wide world like the World Wide Web.

AT&T began 1996 with a bang by announcing that its AT&T Business Network would shift to an exclusively Web-based service by mid-year. At press time, the Business Network was still entrenched in the AT&T Interchange Online Network, a proprietary system.

The Business Network offers news and services to professionals, managers,



and entrepreneurs. The Web-based system will support open-standard, cross-platform possibilities, the latest trend in technology. Contact AT&T at 900 660 2299, or visit the Web site (http://www.att. com/bnet/).

Al and Newt: Are They Checking Their E-Mail?

The Rand Corporation, a non-profit think tank, released a proposal encouraging legislators to install universal e-mail access across America. Last month, *The Net* decided to test the proposal's basic premise — that Internet connectivity fosters democracy — and e-mailed partisan tech gurus Al Gore and Newt Gingrich, asking the politicians to comment on the proposal's merit, and challenging each to answer first and in person. Let's check their progress:

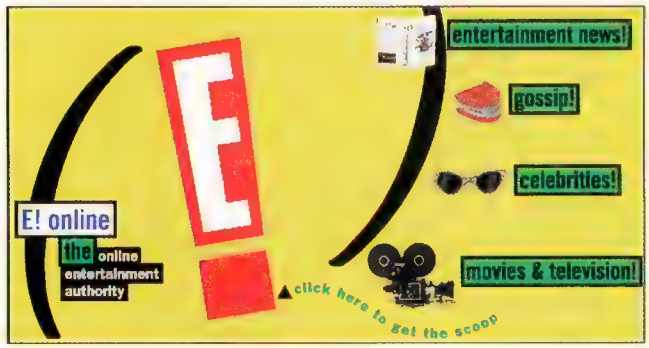
Al: no response
Newt: no response

Perhaps you can goad our two turtle-paced competitors into responding. Contact Newt at georgia6@hr.house.gov, and Al at http://www.whitehouse.gov/White_House/EOP/OVP/html/GORE_Home.html.
The proposal can be found at http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR650/.

Media Giants Wed To Form E! Online

Two of our nation's most oddly punctuated media enterprises — E! Entertainment Television and clnet: the computer network — have joined forces to form E! Online, a gargantuan, advertisement-driven Web site that aims to become the definitive Internet resource for glitzy Hollywood entertainment content.

The site, slated to launch this summer, will be free to all who stop by. You'll find all the irreverent celebrity interviews, gossip, news, previews, and behind-the-scene coverage you've come to expect from E!'s successful cable TV channel. You'll also find plenty of bells and whistles, courtesy of clnet (**http://www.cnet.com/**).



"A large goal of the new company is to build the premiere online entertainment news organization in the world," says Kevin Wendle, president of clnet television. "There are no two companies better positioned to accomplish this given E!'s strong brand recognition and marketing capabilities, and clnet's technology and Web-producing expertise."

While clnet: the computer network may be "undercapitalized" as a company name spelled out on paper, it's no pauper child when it comes to its vast reserve of in-house creative capital. The San Francisco-based company will bring to the table its DREAM software package (Delivery of Real-time Enhanced Advertising Messages), which enables advertisers to pitch custom ads to different viewer demographics. And, of course, E! Online will also boast all the requisite Web page doo-dads — Java, Shockwave, and RealAudio — to let viewers know that the new alliance means business.

Claiming to be "the world's first on-air source for news, information and resources related to computers and digital technologies," clnet has, in less than a year and a half, built itself into a daunting resource. It already runs two impressive Web sites — clnet online and shareware.com ("the best place for downloading software," says the company), and its weekly television show, "clnet central," is distributed to national audiences via the USA Network and the Sci-Fi Channel.

The new company, which will be a 50/50 equity split between the two players, will be based in Los Angeles, but will have a production and technology arm located in San Francisco. If you'd like to check out E! Online's pre-launch home page, go to **http://www.eonline.com** — it's Java-enhanced, and offers an e-mail link so you can send content suggestions. ■

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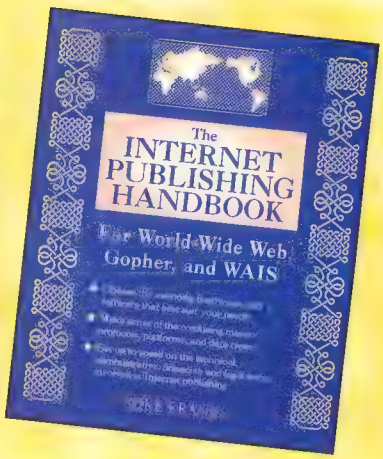
The Best Internet Books

The Internet Publishing Handbook

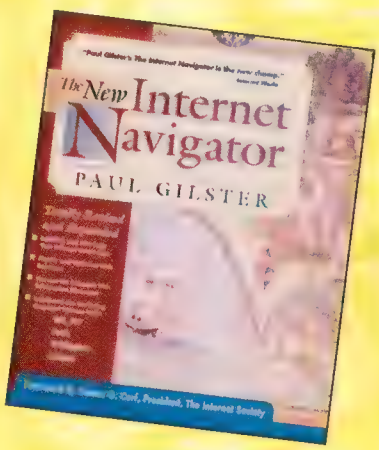


info

Mike Franks, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company
617 944 3700
http://www.aw.com/devpress/
ISBN: 0-201-48317-3
$22.95 U.S.

As its title suggests, this book focuses on publishing for the Web, Gopher, and WAIS. Combining these subjects is especially odd, as it seems newer users are the target audience — and they most probably have never heard of Gopher or WAIS. The author also attempts to cover too large a territory in just 400 pages — Web servers alone demand a book this size. But a more serious problem is that, although the cover promises the book will help you choose "the methods, hardware, and software that best suit your needs," specific information is lacking. The author tells us, for example, that Macs are user-friendly and make good Web servers. But what kinds of Macs? Performas? Power PC 7100s? This kind of vagueness will likely leave new (and experienced) users more confused than enlightened. *The Internet Publishing Handbook* would be useful only for someone who wants to skim the surface of a poorly written and outlandishly superficial text. It's a nice outline, and there's a decent section on copyright laws, but serious net publishers would do better to find another resource. *— Shel Kimen*

The New Internet Navigator



info

Paul Gilster, John Wiley & Sons, Inc
http://www.wiley.com
compbks@jwiley.com
ISBN: 0471-12694-2
$24.95 U.S.

From the title, I assumed this was going to be another book listing tons and tons of Web sites. Wrong. The "Internet" in the title means the whole thing, all those resources that existed before the Web — those arcane text-only utilities that were the bread and butter of engineers and computer science students. "Navigator" isn't wholly accurate, either. Instead of listing Gophers, FTP sites, and WAIS engines, this 700+-page monstrosity explains, in mind-crushing detail, how to use all of the Internet resources. The author seems to be an old-school user, more comfortable with Unix than with the point-and-click of the Web. The most useful chapter is on how to get connected; it discusses the different types of access, and how to configure them. Various service providers are profiled, which is good for use as a comparison when you are trying to pick a provider. A non-technical, general discussion of the mysteries of the TCP stack is included here. This book is probably most appropriate for speed readers who really want to know the Internet inside and out. *—Wayne Cunningham*

Net Chick

info

Carla Sinclair, Henry Holt
800-288-2131
http://www.cyborganic.com/People/carla
ISBN: 0-8050-4393-4 $19.95 U.S.

Bold, beautiful and full of brains. *Net Chick*, near and dear to my heart as a "Smart-Girl Guide to the Wired World," is outstanding. With a fresh perspective and glorious layout (this book is beyond hip), *Net Chick* guides the twenty/thirtysomething urban girl with a modem through a collection of where to, how to, and personal insight, which is indeed insightful. Sinclair organizes content into categories — fashion (no, not vogue style), sex, personalities, entertainment, zines, etc., and intersperses how to's, definitions, and Internet history into clever side bars — there if you need them, but not in the way if you're already knee deep in cyberland. And, thankfully, she spares us the usual non-sensical filler found in far too many of the other Internet paper tours. *Net Chick* ranks as one of the most innovative, creative and well-written guides to the online world I've seen so far. It's beyond a doubt the best resource in print format for "wired" women. *— Shel Kimen* ■

the net

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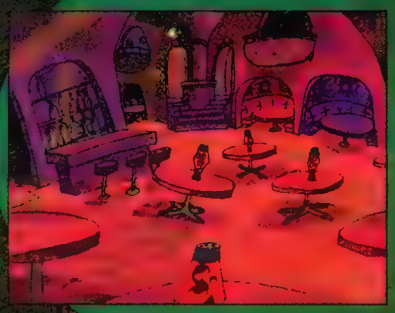
Wherever you see this icon in the magazine, you'll know that you can find companion material on the subject you're reading about at **http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/mag.html**. Online extras include HTML templates, discussions, surveys, and more.



Talk To Us!

Come visit us in the **Lava Lounge**. This month, Lynda Weinman will lead a *Web Designer's Roundtable*. Bring your questions, or share tricks you've learned with others. Check the online calendar at **http://www.thenet-usa.com/chat/chat.html** for details.

And...

Join us on the last Tuesday of each month, when Blue Grrrl hits the Web for a *Grrrls Night Out*. Girls of all ages (5 to Grandma) are invited to visit *The Net*'s **Lava Lounge** to hang out, chat about issues, and help one another find women's and girls' resources online. The show starts at 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, and goes until 6:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. If you're really good, they might round up a few special guest stars!

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Trouble in Internet City:

It's Time to Tone Down the Alarmist Hyperbole

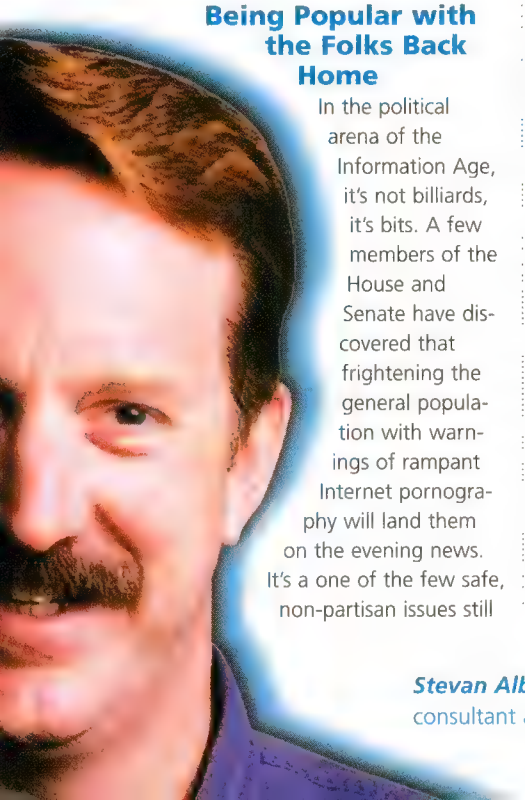
Stevan Alburty

Some seek the answers to the Great Questions of Life in religion; some in philosophy, or in planetary alignments. I turn to Broadway musicals.

I've been observing the controversy over pornography on the Internet, and suddenly realized where I've heard this all before: "The Music Man." Harold Hill, a turn-of-the-century con artist and traveling salesman, shows up in River City, Iowa. His scam is organizing kids into "boys bands," and selling expensive uniforms and instruments to the parents of the children. The tykes, of course, have all been blessed with more freckles and cowlicks than talent.

Harold knows the only way to get these tight-fisted rubes to open their pocketbooks is to manufacturer a crisis. He must convince the local parents that unless their boys join his band, their very souls will somehow be in jeopardy. He sees an opportunity when he notices someone is about to open a billiards parlor smack-dab in the center of town. "Ya got trouble," he sings to the terrified townspeople, "right here in River City." Pool, that idle game, is the devil's playground, and will eventually turn innocent children into "libertine men and scarlet women."

Being Popular with the Folks Back Home



In the political arena of the Information Age, it's not billiards, it's bits. A few members of the House and Senate have discovered that frightening the general population with warnings of rampant Internet pornography will land them on the evening news. It's a one of the few safe, non-partisan issues still available. If there's anything politicians love more than kissing babies, it's saving their souls. Congress will cut funds for children's education, nutrition, and health programs, but when it comes to morals, our legislators are every kid's best friend.

Several dynamics are at work here. The most obvious is this topic's popularity with the folks back home. Voters like their issues to fit neatly onto the back of a bumper sticker, and making the Internet safe for the wee ones requires virtually no intellectual energy to communicate or understand.

We trumpet the arrival of the Information Revolution, yet deny adequate arms and ammunition to our youth, those most able to fight and win the war.

There's also a more subtle reason why so many people are running around dithering about Internet pornography: It's my guess that many politicians and parents use this issue as a diversionary tactic to mask their own computer illiteracy. I've seen intelligent, successful senior executives at major corporations turn into quivering ectoplasm when faced with the challenge of even turning on a computer. And the most popular way of diverting attention from their own embarrassment over their inability to master technology is to condemn it. If you hand a hot-button issue like Internet pornography to a segment of the population that already feels alienated with the Information Age, you'll have a tailor-made, socially acceptable way to stay unplugged.

Irresponsible Grandstanding

If it were not so dangerous, the hyperbole surrounding this issue might be comical. In January, the McKinley Group, which publishes the Magellan Internet Directory (**http://www.bond.edu.au/gnn/wic/netinfo.71.html**), proclaimed that half the Web sites it had reviewed were unsafe for children. Half. This type of alarmist nonsense smacks of the most irresponsible form of grandstanding. URL listings that pass the Magellan censors are given a "Green Light" — quite literally an icon of a green light — to indicate that the material is deemed suitable for young browsers. The McKinley site does not specify the criteria by which materials are judged, and invites the general public to report any findings of "inappropriate material." Suddenly, the Information Highway of 1996 is looking like the muddy town square of Salem, Massachusetts, 1692. Witches are everywhere. Unfortunately, the hysteria over pornography is being used by parents and schools to deny students Internet access. It is a baby-and-bathwater problem. Keeping students off the Internet because of fears that their minds will be corrupted causes more damage than it seeks to prevent. It also denies students access to a tool that will be a primary means of communication, information and transactions by the time they enter the job market.

What's Really Obscene

America has a convenient double-standard when it comes to the support of education. We acknowledge its critical importance, yet pay teachers less than garbage collectors. We decry crowded classroom and aging infrastructures, but repeatedly vote down bond issues. We trumpet the arrival of the Information Revolution, yet deny adequate arms and ammunition to our youth, those most able to fight and win the war.

A recent survey by the Software Publishers Association revealed that the student-to-computer ratio is actually decreasing. More than 50 percent of computers in schools today are out-of-date and cannot even be used to access the Internet.

There is no denying the presence of pornography on the Internet. Parents and educators need to take calm, sensible steps to monitor access and usage. But everyone needs to ratchet down the rhetoric. To hobble students' futures due to pornography is itself obscene. ■

Stevan Alburty (**alburty@panix.com**) is a technology consultant and former MIS director of Chiat/Day Advertising.

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Digital Gibberish:
Your First Line of Defense Against Info Age Encroachment

David Sobel

Anyone who doesn't believe that an individual can make a difference would do well to consider the case of Phil Zimmermann, a software programmer in Boulder, Colorado who decided that privacy on the Internet was very important. So important, in fact, he almost went to prison to protect it.

The final chapter in Zimmermann's legal odyssey was written in January, when federal prosecutors announced they were ending a three-year investigation into the worldwide proliferation of a program called "Pretty Good Privacy," or PGP. That investigation centered on Zimmermann, the program's author. Why were the feds so interested in this particular piece of software? It's a long story, but here's a quick rundown.

Encryption for the Masses

PGP is an encryption program that renders a data file unreadable to anyone other than the intended recipient. Let's say you're sending sensitive information in an e-mail message. To guarantee its security as it traverses the Internet, you can use PGP to scramble your message. The result would be digital gibberish that could only be decrypted by the person to whom you're transmitting. The program is very powerful — so strong that not even government code-breakers can easily crack the scrambled messages. And that's how Zimmermann got into trouble.

The U.S. government classifies powerful encryption programs as "munitions" that cannot be exported out of the country without official approval. That's right — this stuff is treated the same as tanks and ground-to-air missiles. Some time after Zimmermann created PGP, the program found its way onto the Internet, and out of United States borders. Although Zimmermann has always maintained that he didn't send the program out of the country, or otherwise facilitate its "export," the government convened a grand jury in San Jose, California, and advised him that he was the target of the investigation. His life turned upside down, his financial resources became severely strained, and he faced substantial time in a federal prison.

PGP is "encryption for the masses." It puts state-of-the-art security technology into the hands of every user — for free.

Under similar circumstances, most people would have decided that it was time to retreat. But that's not what Zimmermann did. He launched a very public campaign to promote the use of PGP, explaining his belief that the average person needs access to privacy-enhancing technology to protect against the potential threats of the Information Age. He debated government officials in public forums.

When they said that "privacy paranoia" is unfounded, and that the government can be trusted to do the right thing, he reminded them about Richard Nixon and J. Edgar Hoover. When they claimed that PGP could be used by terrorists and drug-dealers to conceal illegal activity, he told moving stories of its use by human rights activists in repressive countries.

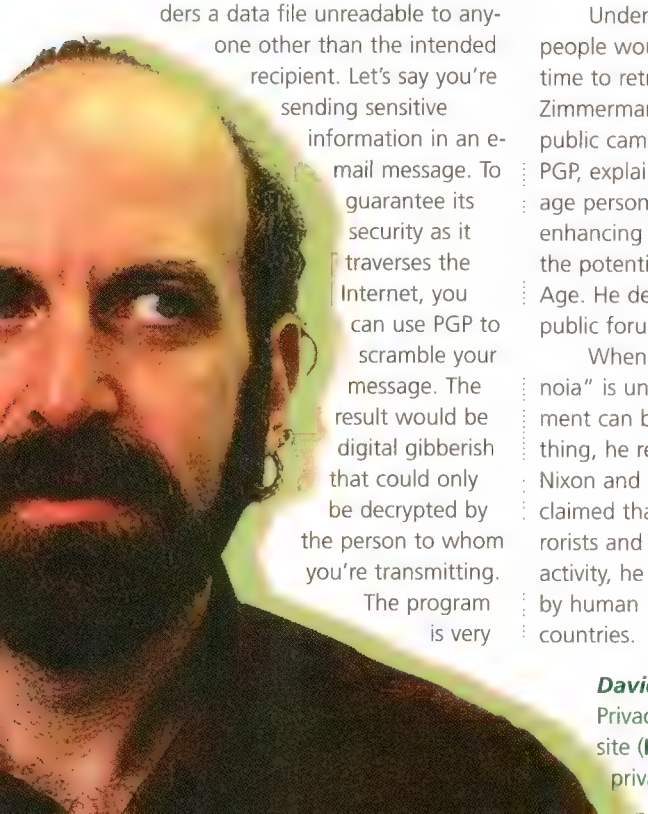
Creating an Underground Hero

Most notably, Zimmermann continued to improve PGP, releasing new versions with added functionality. Last year, he completed work on PGPFone, a program that can turn a computer into a secure telephone impervious to wiretapping. If the government had hoped to silence Zimmermann, or stop his development work, it failed miserably. If anything, the PGP investigation turned the programmer into an underground folk hero, and provided an unintended boost to the proliferation of the program. A lot of people figured that if the government didn't want them to have PGP, they needed to get it.

Zimmermann's rationale for his work is best stated in the PGP documentation:

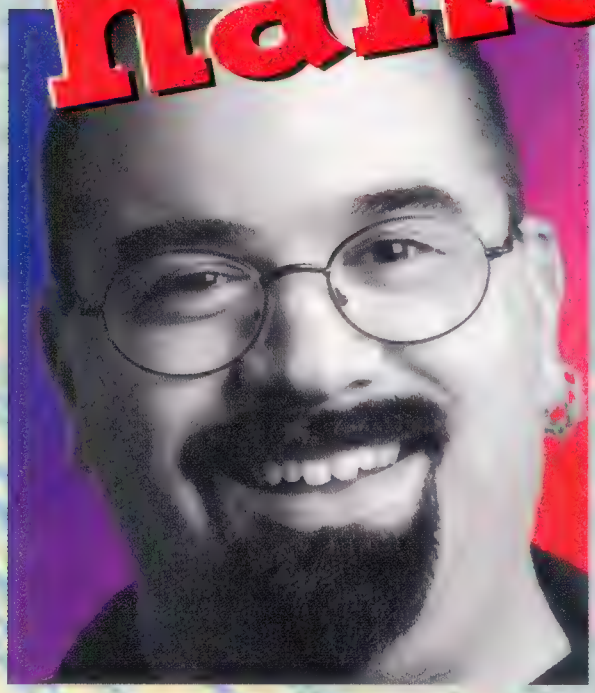
"If privacy is outlawed, only outlaws will have privacy. Intelligence agencies have access to good cryptographic technology. So do the big arms and drug traffickers. So do defense contractors, oil companies, and other corporate giants. But ordinary people and grassroots political organizations mostly have not had access to affordable 'military grade' public-key cryptographic technology. Until now."

PGP is "encryption for the masses." It puts state-of-the-art security technology into the hands of every user — for free. The online community owes a real debt to Phil Zimmermann, and there was a collective sigh of relief on the net when the government finally announced that he would not be prosecuted. One final word for those who want to start using PGP: Although the recent versions are more user-friendly than earlier iterations, using them is still not as simple as clicking and dragging. But Phil Zimmermann is working on it. You can download PGP and PGPFone at **http://www.epic.org/privacy/tools.html**. ■



David Sobel (**sobel@epic.org**) is a legal counsel to the Electronic Privacy Information Center, based in Washington, D.C. The EPIC Web site (**http://www.epic.org/**) contains an extensive archive of material on privacy and cryptography policy.

"I wanna hold your hand!"



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Think BIG — Think THE BIG HACK

St. Jude

I keep getting this same e-mail message. Its signature changes, but it always reads:

```
>>>>>hello StJude I read your
column in The Net zine. and i
would like your definition of
hacking. and could you give me
information on hacking and some
good www sites for hacking
thanks
```

My general definition of hacking is the one I made up and "quoted" in my last column: Hacking is the clever circumvention of imposed limits.

Because You Can

In computer hacking, you start by dreaming up something cool to do, then you analyze exactly what keeps you from doing it, and then you see what available tools you can use in new, creative ways to make it happen. This is it, in its pure schematic form: the hack. Why hack? The answer, in ITS pure schematic form, is: Because you can.

Oh, all right — because it's fun, that's why. Because pulling off a hack feels indescribably great. Because, when your supple monkey mind does something impossible, it's as personally wonderful as doing a backflip. It's superb to pull off a hack you can brag about, but it's majestic even if nobody ever knows. It feels gooood. Now, before anyone picks up the phone to put me away for corrupting the literate, I gotta make it plain: I'm not inciting you to take up computer crime. Oh no: Crime is the easy way out. I'm trying to juke you into something more difficult, and by far weirder: THE BIG HACK.

Urgent Hacks

Hacking can be directed against ANY limits. A hacker is me, or you, or anyone who keeps in mind the crucial question, What cool thing can I hack? Urgent hacks — those that can be defined as hacking for our lives — involve hacking through stuff imposed upon us, US PERSONALLY, by these limits:

How can we use our monkey ingenuity to be smarter still, lie in the shade more often, and not kill each other so much?

1) **Glitches in the society at large — traditional prohibitions, tribal jujus, and SNAFUs;**
2) **biases in the people close enough to get at us — friends, lovers, relatives, employers, administrators, *et. al*;**
3) **our personal myopia — not being alert to hackable opportunities;**
4) **our, duh, stupidity about getting it, whatever "it" may be; and above all,**
5) **laziness.**

Laziness is huge. We're like lions. We grumble at each other until a volunteer runs down a hoofed mammal. Then we eat until we don't want to stand up, and flonk down in the shade until we can't ignore that we're hungry again. Humans are very lazy about being all there, intellectually. You could lie around in the shade more often if you hacked the way you do your laundry, fer xsakes.

But the BIG HACK — the ultimate hack — is this: How can we use our monkey ingenuity to be smarter still, lie in the shade more often, and not kill each other so much? This hack needs the best minds the planet can produce, and hackers tend to be very, very smart. So, why are they still messing with Unix? My snotty boyfriend says the first thing you learn as a freshman nerd is that the smartest of the smart become mathematicians. (His degree is in math.) If your brain is shoddier, you pursue physics (he minored in physics), and if you can't muster the IQ chips for physics, you might settle into the glory professions: medicine, law, and business. Or sag down through softer sciences — engineering and geology — until you finally sog onto the squishy bottom rung of the abstraction ladder: psychology, anthropology, and sociology. This is depressing. Brilliant hacker nerds are stuck being mathematicians? How we gonna save the species like that?

Hack the Primate Life

Daily news beeps about how much we need to hack the primate life stuff — better patterns for human societies, how to reprogram our leftover lemur subroutines, how to think about hacking thought. This is starting to happen. There's a brand new field called evolutionary psychology, for instance. There are new branches of biochemistry, and who knows what next. One of the most brilliant hackers on the planet — a Unix trickster since age 13, a phone phreaker extraordinaire, and a monster system intruder — is now studying evolutionary... well, never mind. He's turned his ruby laser mind to the BIG HACK, and this is gooood. Why aren't YOU out hacking something? And, as for Web sites for hacking, there aren't any this week. There will be next week, when you put up yours. Please. Then, write and tell me about it. ■

St. Jude (**stjude@aol.com**) has coauthored with R.U. Sirius a self-help manual called *HOW TO MUTATE AND TAKE OVER THE WORLD*, now in bookstores everywhere.

The Usual Cyber Suspects:

Can They Accurately Reflect the Soul of the Net?

Jon Phillips

Their names read like the seating chart for an Information Age roundtable: John Barlow, Lisa Palac, Douglas Rushkoff... Mitch Kapor, Howard Rheingold, Nicholas Negroponte... Denise Caruso, Clifford Stohl, Tsutomo Shimomura. Can you grab two more chairs? R.U. Sirius just called, and he's bringing Timmy Leary.

Meet the Usual Cyber Suspects, an elite group of philosopher-pundits who, at the flick of a microphone switch, can provide print and broadcast journalists with perfectly composed narratives on trendy Internet topics of the day. Need a quote on virtual communities? Call Rheingold. Need a quote on data encryption? Take your pick. A team of luminaries from the Electronic Frontier Foundation is manning its phones, eagerly awaiting your query.

Diversity of opinion is traded for sound-bite journalism, which is deplorable given the Internet's promise as the great media equalizer.

The Suspects' fame presents a glaring irony: These scholars have built their careers on investigating (and oftentimes evangelizing) the Information Age, yet their pedigree as celebrity pundits is determined by newspapers, magazines, and television — Space Age communication models that refuse to go away. Sadly, mass media have always sponsored usual suspects, and the Internet isn't immune to this tradition. But, as reporters scurry for quotes, nudging otherwise humble souls toward the bully pulpit, it is the public who suffers: Diversity of opinion is traded for sound-bite journalism, which is deplorable given the Internet's promise as the great media equalizer.

Keyword searches on Lexis-Nexis illustrate the current climate well. Lexis-Nexis is a database of content from more than 5,800 national news organizations, including big-time media like *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsweek* and CNN. A search for Rheingold, the prolific author-theorist who penned "The Virtual Community," turned up 656 hits. In other words, his name appeared in 656 different articles and TV transcripts. Now compare Rheingold's numbers to those of Tjames Madison, a freelance journalist who spends up to two hours a day in Usenet debate forums — enough action to warrant his own newsgroup, alt.usenet.tjames. A Lexis-Nexis search for Madison, an authenticated Internet celebrity, uncovered zero hits.

Now the flipside: A Yahoo! search for Madison indicates that the Internet and "the outside world" operate on vastly different planes, their paths intersecting far less often than one may think. Within the confines of cyberspace, Tjames is referenced with abandon, his name appearing in 27 different newsgroups and Web pages. Twenty-seven hits, you say. Big deal. Well, it is when compared to a Yahoo! search for Rheingold. The granddaddy of heady Internet theory collected a whopping four hits. Indeed, Madison — who says he has "no interest in becoming a lab rat for the sake of enlightened culture" — gets around.

Lisa Palac, the de facto cybersex authority and former editor of the now-defunct *Future Sex* magazine, ascribes the cyber pundit conundrum to ills that have always plagued mass media.

"The media want credibility, however bogus," she says. "They want an author, someone with a product to show. I'm no expert, just someone with a sense of adventure and determination, but I'm willing to go public and say things that a lot of people think. And believe me, after a while, you feel like simply holding up flash cards with your answers on them."

So concurs best-selling author Doug Rushkoff, who is described by his own Web page as an "author, social theorist, journalist and software developer."

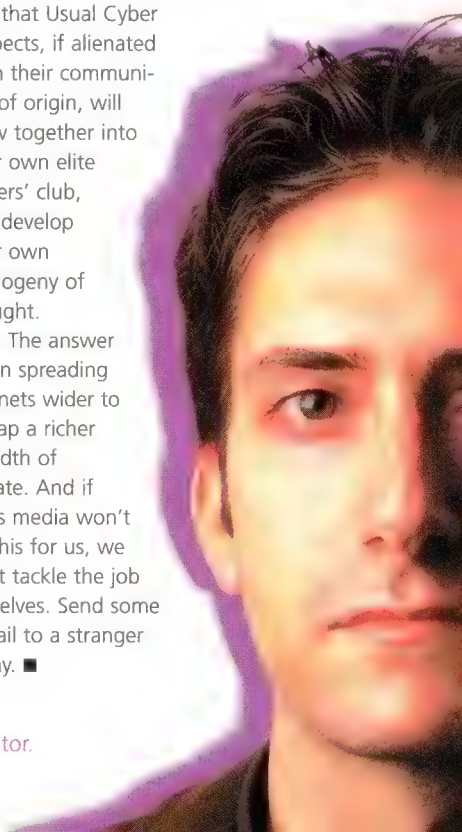
"The problem," he says, "is a result of the mainstream media's laziness and its more subtle agenda of preserving dominance over the information sphere. They do this by calling people who are already on their phone lists, who have big titles next to their names, and who can be counted on to keep cyberspace looking dangerous, complex, or at least the province of experts like themselves."

For the record, Rushkoff says he has shed his cyber pundit tag.

"I used to get interviewed a hell of a lot during the early nineties," he says. "That's when the 'usual suspects' were me, R.U. Sirius, Todd Rundgren and Phiber Optic. I was doing a couple of interviews every day. I'm glad I'm not a member of today's cyber-punditry, though. I truly believe that 'cyber,' as a cultural phenomenon, is way over."

Currently, Internet pornography is a hot-button issue, and, as Palac points out, Mike Godwin, counsel to the Electronic Frontier Foundation, is every journalists new best friend. Does this make Godwin any less credible? Should we disregard him as a tool of the press? Absolutely not. However, we must acknowledge that usual suspects, cyber or otherwise, cannot accurately reflect community opinions that are by nature transient and diverse. We must acknowledge that fame breads isolation, and that Usual Cyber Suspects, if alienated from their communities of origin, will grow together into their own elite players' club, and develop their own homogeny of thought.

The answer lies in spreading our nets wider to entrap a richer breadth of debate. And if mass media won't do this for us, we must tackle the job ourselves. Send some e-mail to a stranger today. ■



Jon Phillips (**job@thenet-usa.com**) is *The Net's* managing editor.

How to Build a (Better) Web Page

Get Your Webbed Feet Wet

The Web is a phenomenon, no doubt about it. First, it was just a few links and thumbnail GIFs viewable through Mosaic — back in the "old days" when ISDN and Java were the stuff of dreams. Now, everyone and his dog wants to create a Web page, no matter how narcissistic or blatantly worthless — or how visually or thematically compelling — the presentation may be.

The burst of the Web into the public's consciousness reminds us of when desktop publishing first challenged the printing press. Suddenly, anyone could publish, and nearly everyone did. These days, Web pages are a mere 72 dots per inch, which makes for wondrous creative opportunities — and also a lot of crap. But with a bit of training and basic design rules, you should be in business. Perhaps literally.

Our feature this month focuses on how to make a Web page, whether you just want a simple page that says, "I'm online!," or whether you're looking to create or enhance a full-fledged, multi-level, original content-laden site. Dive on in.

CREATING WEB PAGES, **INSTANTLY**

- If you're itching to get your page up and running, and haven't found an ISP yet, maybe the best way to erect a home page is to take advantage of your **America Online**, **Prodigy**, or **CompuServe** membership. All of 'em now have **design-a-home-page** services and space for your site. Get the lowdown on **pages 31-34**.

- You can get a home page up and running by following **our step-by-step process for creating a basic site**. We invite you to steal some of our code, or even use the whole site we created as a template. Start the journey on **page 36**.

HOW TO **SPICE UP** YOUR SITE

- Taking a tour through the trenches of Web design can be tough without a safety net. Web Design-o-Rama goddess Lynda Weinman guides us safely through her **top 10 Web design enhancements** on **pages 40-45**.

- Don't want to bother with HTML coding? We delve into the potential and practicalities of **Adobe Acrobat** on **page 46**.

WHAT YOU NEED **TO KNOW** TO **GET THERE**

Not sure which **software** to use, or what **hardware** you'll need for your Web page? Maybe you're searching for the right Internet **Service Provider** to house your home page, or want to know how to get your page visited by the masses. Our selection of home page resources:

Software Tools **48-49**
Hardware **50**
Design Books **51**
Finding a Provider **52**
Hiring a Designer **53**
Getting Listed **54**
Copyright Issues **55**
Glossary **60**

HOW THE **PROS** DO IT

- **Profile of a Web Master:** We probe the mind of @tlas's exquisite designer, Michael Macrone, on **page 56**.

- **Confessions of a Web Warrior:** Learn Web wisdom from our new-found Shao-lin master, Wayne Bremser, on **page 59**.

Create Web Pages, Instantly

Crystal Waters

What's the Web Got to Do With It?

The past year has seen Web creation software move from simple text processors with a few tricks up their sleeves to master Web-making machines such as PageMill. The Big Three commercial online services now offer free space (and, depending on your platform, free software) to members who want to plant their feet in the Web. Tools coming from individual shareware authors to the gods of Microsoft are being built (and rebuilt) at a blazing speed to serve the Web-creating public and professionals alike.

Despite the fears and arguments that books and other print media are dying, the Web has a long way to go before it could take the place of printed paper. Still, out of the dusty piles of millions of sites will rise high-quality, worth-top-bookmark-billing Web creations. Not because of snazzy animations, and not because these sites have big-money sponsors (O.K., both of those may help), but because we as consumers keep using what we want and need, and the Web is steadily becoming a place of true assets.

HTML and the Web have made information be about more than just presentation. Instead, information has become a way of joining together (hopefully) relevant resources accessible with a click. The Web was born at CERN (**http:// www.cern.ch/**, the European Laboratory for Particle Physics, back in the late 80s/early 90s, as a brainstorm by Tim Berners-Lee (**http://www.w3.org/hypertext/WWW/People/Berners-Lee-Bio.html**). He termed the Web "distributed computing." While clicking through Web pages seems like a simple enough task to us, a lot of technoid think-hours went into the basics behind a hyperlink.

Web Pages to Watch

Macromedia's Shockwave sets a new level of interactive performance on the net, but users should beware crashing computers. If you want to see some optimal Web design before you start on your own page, visit cnet (http://www.cnet.com/); BOBAWORLD (http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/search.html); and Weblust (http://www.weblust.com/) for links to some hot sites. And ReZ.n8 (http://www.rezn8.com/) is a great example of good Web design.

Design Tip

Read *Looking Good In Print* by Roger Parker (Ventana Press, ISBN 1-56604-047-7, $24.95 U.S.). This long-time, best-selling desk-top publishing design book explains the basic rules of text and print design in comprehensive, easy-to-understand detail. It's available at **http://www.vmedia.com/cat/press/store/lgp.3/index.html.**

Plain text files with hyperlinks were amazing in their day. But just as books are more exciting with accompanying illustrations, and illustrations are more intriguing if they become 3D and/or animated, Web sites invite more challenging and visually stimulating content, as well.

As we go to press, Macromedia's Shockwave has gone to public beta, and it kept *The Net* staff glued to our screens as we watched good and bad implementations of the technology (and waited for our computers to reboot after crashing numerous times. Ah, betas…). Shockwave, according to Macromedia, "enables the playback of high-impact multimedia on the World Wide Web, setting a new level of interactive performance on the Internet." Technology like this also gives users more stuff to wait for as files download to their computers, and authors more of a learning curve if they want to compete with other site masters.

Which brings us back to the basics. Anyone can learn to write codes or use PageMill with a little patience. What makes good Web is stuff like the value of the content; the quality of construction; navigational instinctiveness; and uniqueness — but good design brings it all together. Rules still apply.

Don't let your Web site get lost when the dust settles. ■

Commercial Web Sites:
Let Your **Online Service** Give You a Hand in **HTML**

Todd Marshall

So, you're psyched about the two free megabytes your online service is giving you to make your own Web site, but not quite enough to learn HTML, right? No sweat. America Online, CompuServe, and Prodigy make it simple for you to create your page of fame, as long as you're a subscriber. Keep in mind, though, that a couple of the Web page helpers the online services offer use a fill-in-the-blanks metaphor, so your page isn't going to look especially unique. In fact, it's probably going to look like it was made with an HTML cookie cutter.

The good news is that with most of the services, you can fill up your free Web page space with just anything, so you can use just about any Web-making tool you can think of. If you don't have a knack with HTML, just use your favorite word processor. Or, if you're serious, try to create a page using Java or Macromedia's Shockwave. Just keep in mind that the browser your online service provides may not support what you've created. If you want to skip the HTML lessons for now, check out the handy little Web-making tools your online service offers. But be advised — after spending some time looking at what the major online services offer, I realized that, at least for now, the runaway winner of Web creators on the online services is CompuServe's Home Page Wizard.

AMERICA ONLINE

Name of Programs:
My Home Page, My Place

Platform:
My Home Page — Windows; My Place — Mac and Windows

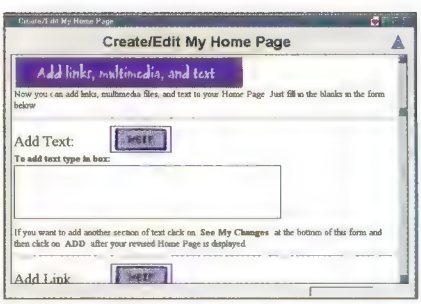
How to Find It: KEYWORD: My Place (Mac and Windows); or Personal Publisher (Windows)

Amount of Space You Get:
2MB per account

Contact Info:
800 827 6364, **http://www.aol.com/**

America Online offers 2MB of its server space for anyone with an AOL account. Unlike other services, however, there are two ways to use that free space. AOL offers both "My Home Page" or "My Place." My Home Page couldn't get much easier to use, since all you have to do is fill in some statistics — like name, sex, marital status, and so on. Multimedia files like pictures and sound files are also accepted, although you don't have any real control over where they go. One nice feature: AOL lets you make the page accessible and searchable to America Online members, the entire Internet, or just yourself.

If you don't have a scanner, another cool service AOL maintains is Picture Place. Send two pictures of anything (no smut; remember, this is AOL), in any format (print, negative, or slide) by mail, and in *(continued...)*



My Home Page for AOL Windows users is merely a form waiting to be filled out.

How To Use It:

1) For the step-by-step Web creation using AOL's My Home Page, go to "Keyword: Personal Publisher." NOTE: If you want to simply upload your own HTML code, go to "Keyword: My Place."

2) Personal Publisher lists a bunch of areas for you to explore; you'll want to start with the Home Page Tutorial.

3) When you're ready to create a page, click on "Create/Edit my Home Page."

4) The entire creation process is handled through a variety of Web pages. On the first page, you'll fill in all your vitals (name, age, hobbies, etc.).

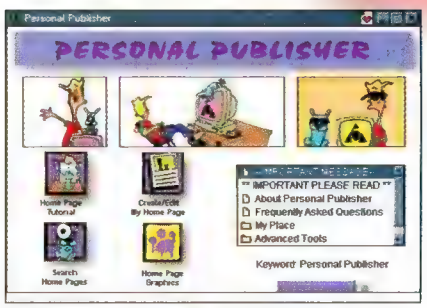
5) Scrolling down the page, you'll find areas in which to add text, pictures, hypertext links, and multimedia.

6) Click "Preview" to see what you've made. If you like it, hit "Save" and you will be presented with your Web address.

about 10 days, you'll receive e-mail with your pictures in digital form. And, yes, the originals are sent back to you.

If you know little or nothing about HTML, this is a nice in-between. You can upload your own pictures, or choose something from AOL's library, and the push-button interface of the Web-page builder is simple to use. The downside, of course, is that you have little to say about how your page works.

If you know even just a little HTML, you're going to make much better use of your 2MB with AOL's My Place, which lets you simply upload your own HTML code and graphics, so you have a series of pages that look any way you want them to. The fact that you can make these pages searchable only to yourself is nice, since you can keep your area away from public consumption until you're ready for the big unveiling.



The Personal Publisher area on AOL is only reachable through the Windows client.

PRODIGY

Name of Program: Personal Web Pages Site Manager

Platform: Windows

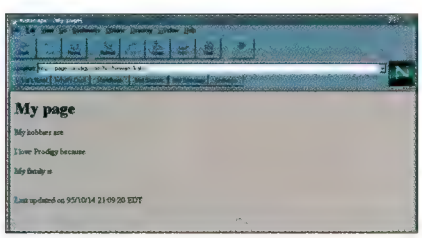
How to Find It: JUMP: Personal Web Pages

Amount of Space You Get: 1MB per account*

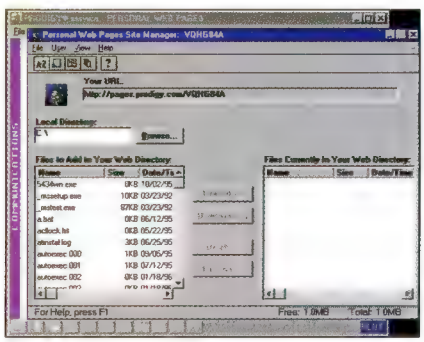
Contact Info: 800 PRODIGY, **http://www.prodigy.com/**

Rumors are floating around the Internet industry that Prodigy is going to dump all of its content and functionality onto the Web, which will mean that you won't be a slave to Prodigy's own software, like you are for all the online services. All you'll need is a Web browser and a Prodigy account. Cool idea, but Prodigy's initial concepts of what its members' pages should look like were pretty bleak. Originally, Prodigy's Web page creation services required no HTML knowledge. Members filled out a form that asked for basic info like their name, hobbies, and so on. This system was simple, but about as basic as you could get.

Now, though, Prodigy's Personal Web Pages Site Manager software basically acts as an FTP-like application to upload and download HTML code that members have already created. It allows for greater flexibility. Prodigy also offers members the HIPPY HTML editor, as well as links to tips and tricks for the HTML neophyte.



Prodigy's form-filled sites all basically look the same.


Personal Web Pages Site Manager: VQHG84A
Your URL:
Local Directory:
Browse...
Files to Add to Your Web Directory:
Files Currently in Your Web Directory:
For Help, press F1
Prodigy's Personal Web Pages Site Manager lets you upload or download HTML files and images.

*Basically, enrollment in Prodigy allows for 1MB of free space per member. However, there are other enrollment choices, if you're willing to pay for them:

WebApprentice	2MB	$2 per month
WebJourneyman	5MB	$5 per month
WebPro	10MB	$10 per month
WebMaster	15MB	$15 per month

How To Use It:

1) Create pages with your HTML editor.

2) Upload the pages you've created to Prodigy's Personal Web Pages area for public consumption. To do this, type "JUMP: Personal Web Pages."

3) Click on "Manage Your Web Site." Prodigy will download the Personal Web Pages Site Manager software to your computer (this will take about seven minutes if you have a 14.4 Kbps modem).

4) After the software is downloaded, it will automatically launch itself.

5) The Personal Web Pages Site Manager will check your enrollment status to determine how many MB of space you're entitled to.

6) The Site Manager software will pop up and ask you what files you'd like to transfer to your area. The process of transferring files resembles an FTP transfer.

When you host your Web Page with the other guys,

Here's what 'they' give you...

(basic html)

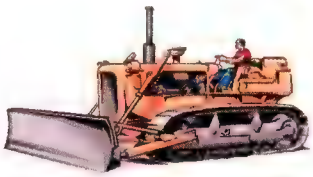
While we give you the

Drilldown Topics

Emailable Forms

Forms to Database

Animation



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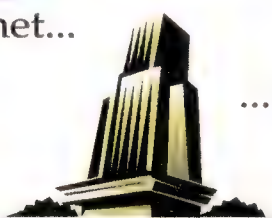

...or you could use the other guys.

Other-World Internet Solutions

800.4.WEB.ADS

(800-493-2237)

eMail:Info@Other-World.Com

http://www.Other-World.Com

Instant Web Page Fact Sheet

America Online
Sign-up Number:
800 827 6364, 703 448 8700
Price Structure:
$9.95 a month (includes five hours); $2.95 for each additional hour

Prodigy:
Sign-up Phone Number:
800 776 3449
Price Structure:
Basic Plan: $9.95 a month (includes five hours); $2.95 for each additional hour per month
30/30 Plan: $29.95 a month (includes 30 free hours of usage); each additional hour per month is $2.95

CompuServe:
Sign-up Number:
800 848 8990, 614 457 8600
Price Structure:
Regular subscription is $9.95 a month (includes 5 free hours); each additional hour is $2.95.
Super Value club: $24.95 a month (includes 20 free hours); each additional hour is $1.95.

COMPUSERVE

Name of Program:
Home Page Wizard

Platform: Windows

How to Find It: GO HPWIZ

Amount of Space You Get:
1MB per account

Contact Info: 800 433 0389;
http://www.compuserve.com/

Of all the online service offerings, CompuServe's Home Page Wizard is the best, without question. It's the most comprehensive and, more importantly, it's open-ended. Rather than make you walk step-by-step through a series of Web page forms (as AOL's My Home Page does), CompuServe offers a free software package called the Home Page Wizard, which is outstanding. It's a stand-alone application that's much like a desktop publishing package. You can place text, pictures, and links everywhere and anywhere you want. Then, just click a button, and all the information is sent up to CompuServe. You never have to see a word of HTML.

Also, if you think you'll spend a lot of time creating your page, you'll save money, since you can create your page off-line with the software. The other services charge you during the time you're creating a Web page. Plus, CompuServe offers a free picture-scanning service that's much like the one AOL provides.

The one downside to CompuServe's method is that it only offers 1MB of free server space, as opposed to America Online's 2MB. However, you do get the choice of naming the end part of your Web page (**http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/[whatever]**) and if you're partial to any HTML editing system, you can skip the Wizard and do the page yourself.

While CompuServe's Page Wizard is as simple to use as a form, it offers more page-making versatility.

Note: Another place to get the CompuServe Home Page Wizard software is from CompuServe's Web page (**http://ourworld.compuserve.com/**).

How To Use It:

1) Type in "GO HPWIZ," which will get the Home Page Wizard software.

2) Launch the Home Page Wizard software.

3) Type in "Page Title" and project name.

4) Type in all your personal information (like name, hobbies, etc.).

5) Select one of four graphical backdrops, which you can change later on, if you wish. The software will take all the elements and put them in the main Home Page Wizard screen.

6) Using the tools provided, you can completely reconstruct your Web page — which text, pictures, and links you use are all up to you.

7) Click the "Publish" button, enter your account information, and you're finished.

Last **Words**

While the CompuServe offering is easily the best from the online services, it's still constricting. There's some HTML functionality left out. If you're using AOL's My Home Page, getting a page up and running is concentration-free, but it's the equivalent of a mug shot. You don't get much say in the matter, and it pretty much looks like everyone else's. It's great to make use of the free-server-space online services like America Online offers, but for true expression of your page, you'll get more mileage out of using regular HTML. Also, if you're creating your page for anything but your own personal goofiness, take it through an Internet provider. If you're creating pages for your business, nothing is going to spell small-time more clearly than having a Web address like **http://home.aol.com/taxhelp.html**. At the very least, use a local Internet provider to get an obscure Web address. ■

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Gabriel Knight 2
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43155 **$51**

Shivers
by Sierra On-Line
You must spend a night inside a mysterious museum. Beware, for evil spirits are on the loose...and they're looking for you
43173 **$36**

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48253 **$42**

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Pandora Directive
by Access
Chris Jones is PI Tex Murphy, last seen in Under A Killing Moon. Also features Barry Corbin of "Northern Exposure."
48424 **$44**

Havoc
by Reality Bytes
Command a Battlecycle, Hypertank or Hovercraft. Blast, jump or throttle past network opponents or challenge yourself.
45856 **$35**

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by Mindscape
You are an orphan whose father has been murdered by an evil knight. He has sworn to destroy you – can you survive?
48567 **$17**

Links Pro 386
by Access
A true golfing experience. Features Harbour Town Golf Links, Banff Springs Resort course and many more!
39733 **$27**

Steal My Web Page!

A Home Page Template for the Web-o-Rama-Challenged

Crystal Waters

The best way to get started when you want to create a home page is to "borrow" other people's code. Find a page you like, and look at how its creator organized cool ideas and nifty links, and provided easy-to-use navigational choices.

What I've done here is walk you through the code I used to create my own site so you can see how it's done.

Feel free to steal what I've done, since it's well known that thievery is the first rule of becoming a Web master.

(Figure 1)

Remembering Nagasaki is one of my favorite sites, so I emulated some of its structure.

STEP 1

First, I started with an opening graphic that is also a link to the site underneath (Figure 1). I "stole" this idea from one of my favorite sites, Remembering Nagasaki (**http://www.exploratorium.edu/nagasaki/**), as well as from BOBAWORLD (**http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/**), which uses this style throughout its home page.

Since I'm using an image that is mostly black, I made the background behind the image black (using **hexadecimal value** 000000).

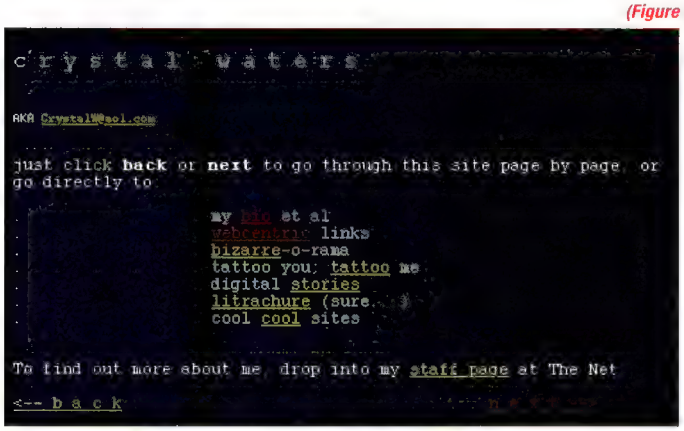
The image is the only link on the page, so I also made text and visited links the color black. For a complete guide to hexadecimal values, visit **http://home.earthlink.net/~lyndaw/hex.html**.

Another option I could have pursued, had the link been a color other than black, would have been to include a text link or alt tag from this front page, since some viewers may have graphics turned off. The code below shows where an alt tag would be added:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Crystal Waters</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY BGCOLOR="#000000" text="#000000" vlink="#000000">

<CENTER>
<a href="crystalw.html"><IMG border=0>
SRC="crystal.gif" alt="enter here"</a>
</CENTER>
</html>
```

(Figure 2)


crystal waters
AKA Crystal@aol.com
just click back or next to go through this site page by page, or go directly to
my bio et al
websentric links
bizarre-o-rama
tattoo you: tattoo me
digital stories
litrachure (sure...)
cool cool sites
To find out more about me, drop into my staff page at The Net
<-- back

This intro page gives visitors a couple of navigational choices.

STEP 2

I decided to keep text pages short, so that viewers won't need to spend a lot of time scrolling around. I also decided to give people a choice of how to navigate through my site (Figure 2) — they can either go directly to a page that might sound interesting, or navigate via the "back" and "next" links (which, as you imagine, are important to keep straight while coding multiple pages). I also decided to stick with the black background with white type (**value** FFFFFF). My links are **hex value** FFFF99, and visited links are **value** 990000. You can change these values to suit your style, but stick with colors that are readable (especially if your site is text-heavy) and kind to the eye. The code for this is at the top of page 37.

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Crystal Waters - aka CrystalW@aol.com</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY BGCOLOR="#000000" TEXT="#FFFFFF" LINK="#FFFF99" VLINK="#990000">

<pre>
<FONT SIZE=5>c r y s t a l   w a t e r s
<hr>
<font size=-1>AKA <a
href="mailto:crystalw@aol.com">CrystalW@aol.com</a></pre>
<hr>
<FONT SIZE=4>

just click <strong>back</strong> or <strong>next</strong> to go through
this site page by page, or go directly to:<p>
 . . . . . my <a href="crystalw1.html">bio</a> et al<br>
 . . . . . <a href="crystalw2.html">webcentric</a> links<br>
 . . . . . <a href="crystalw3.html">bizarre</a>-o-rama<br>
 . . . . . tattoo you; <a href="crystalw4.html">tattoo</a> me<br>
 . . . . . digital <a href="crystalw5.html">stories</a><br>
 . . . . . <a href="crystalw6.html">litrachure</a> (sure...)<br>

 . . . . . cool <a href="crystalw7.html">cool</a> sites<br>
<p>

<hr>
To find out more about me, drop into my <a target=window
href="http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/staff/crystal/crystal.html">staff
page</a> at The Net.
<hr>
<a href="crystal.html"><-- b a c k</a> . . . . . .
<a href="crystalw1.html">n e x t --></a>

</HTML>
```

Checklist: Creating a Multi-Page Site

√ Keep text and links readable on the background

√ Use simple graphics to help get across link significance

√ Give viewers navigational options

√ Keep page names straight

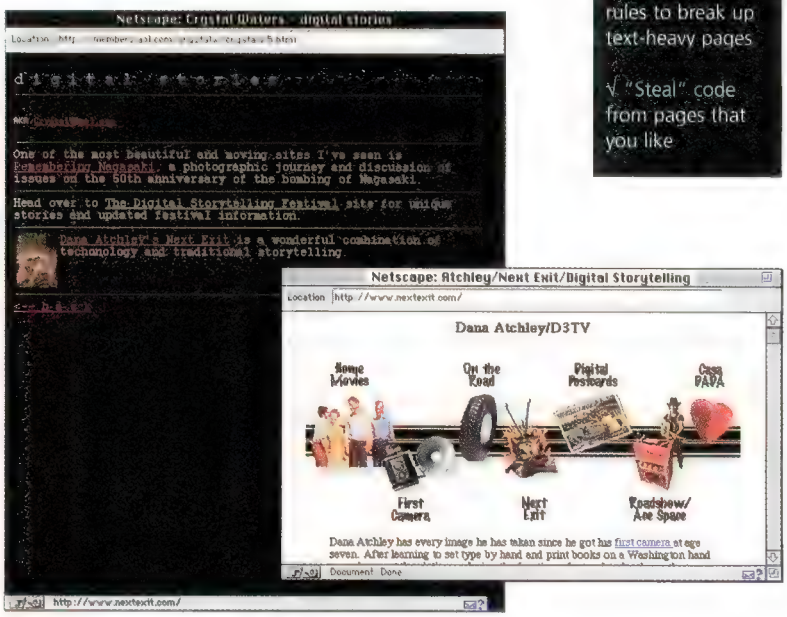
√ Put a mailto: link so you can receive e-mail

√ Make sure the titles in the title bar match the titles on the page

√ Use horizontal rules to break up text-heavy pages

√ "Steal" code from pages that you like

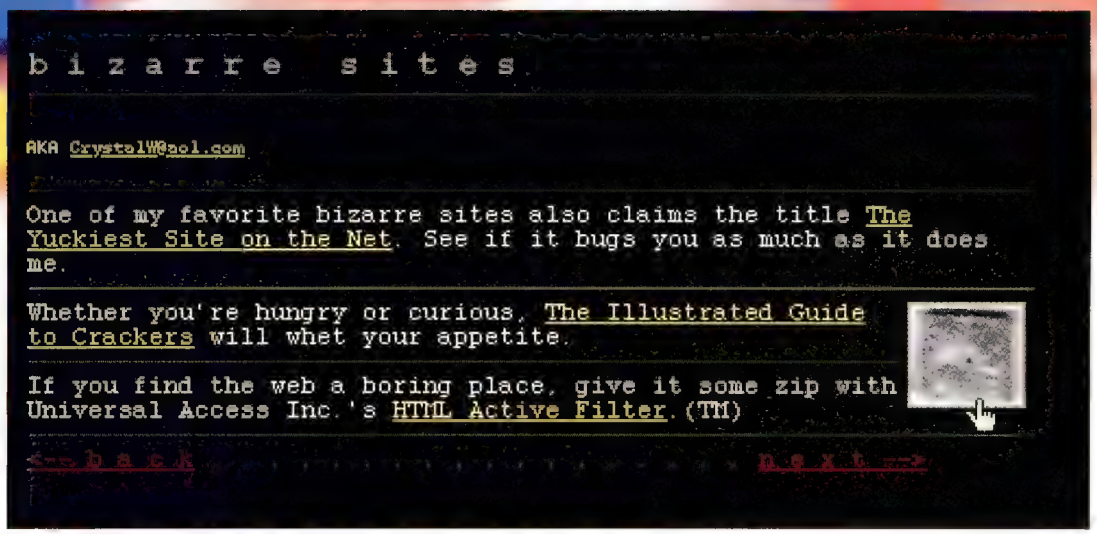
STEP 3 My little site has a lot of cool links for viewers to explore, but I want to make sure they'll come back to my site. One way to keep surfers from wandering too far away is to add a Netscape Navigator tag to the hypertext link. The addition of this tag (target=window) causes Netscape Navigator to open up a new browser window in which to display the linked pages (Figure 3). This keeps the source page (mine) open in the background, while all linked pages are displayed in the second window. In the example shown here, the tag to open up Dana Atchley's Next Exit site is Next Exit. Clicking on this link on the Netscape Navigator page opens up his site in the separate front-most window. This is a great way to keep people from getting lost, as well as entice them to stay within your site — as long as they're using Netscape Navigator 2.0 (for either Windows or Macintosh).



(Figure 3) **The target=window tag opens up a new window, with the source page in the background.**

```
<hr>
<a target=window
href="http://www.nextexit.com/"><img
align=left border=0 src="drivein.gif"> Dana
Atchley's <a target=window
href="http://www.nextexit.com/">Next
Exit</a> is a wonderful combination of
techonology and traditional
storytelling.<br clear=all>
<hr>
```

over story • instant web pages • cover story • instant web pages • co


bizarre sites
AKA CrystalW@aol.com
One of my favorite bizarre sites also claims the title The Yuckiest Site on the Net. See if it bugs you as much as it does me.
Whether you're hungry or curious, The Illustrated Guide to Crackers will whet your appetite.
If you find the web a boring place, give it some zip with Universal Access Inc.'s HTML Active Filter. (TM)
<-- back
next -->

(Figure 4) **A graphic or icon adds visual spice to an otherwise text-heavy page.**

STEP 4

Throwing in bits of images is a good way to spruce up a page. I like to enhance some links with graphics, and in this case, I took a snippet of a graphic from the page this hyperlink goes to, and made it an icon for its link (Figure 4). Rather than have the usual link border around an image, I set the image border to equal zero (for example, <img align=right border=0 src="crack. gif">).

When a visitor places the cursor over the graphic, it will turn into a hand cursor, which signifies a link. I should note that the border=0 tag works only with some browsers, such as Netscape Navigator, Prodigy's browser, and Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

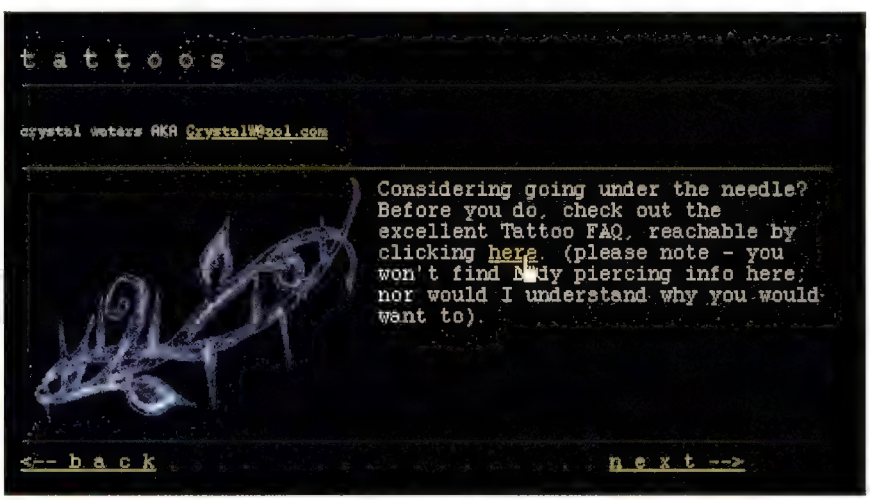
net POWER ON THE CD

The template of the site shown here can be found on our *netPOWER* CD-ROM.

STEP 5

In this case, I used an image to illustrate the topic... especially since I didn't have much more information to convey at this point (Figure 5). The image was taken from a photograph and cropped in Photoshop, and its background was made transparent in order to give it a seamless border around the image. I didn't bother to make the image a link in this case.

I added the tag <br clear=all> after the text so that the horizontal rule and the back/next text would stay at the bottom of the page, below the image. If the <br clear=all> tag hadn't been used, the rule and following text would simply flow right after the other body text.


tattoos
crystal waters AKA CrystalW@aol.com
Considering going under the needle? Before you do, check out the excellent Tattoo FAQ, reachable by clicking here. (please note - you won't find body piercing info here; nor would I understand why you would want to).
<-- back
next -->

(Figure 5) **In this case, the image serves only as decoration.**

```
<hr>

<IMG align=left border=0 src="tat.gif">

Considering going under the needle? Before you do,
check out the excellent Tattoo FAQ, reachable by
clicking <a target=window href="http://www.cis.ohio-
state.edu/hypertext/faq/usenet/bodyart/tattoo-
faq/top.html">here</a>. (please note - you won't
find body piercing info here; nor would I under-
stand why you would want to).<p>

<br clear=all>
<hr>
```

c o o l c o o l s i t e s
crystal waters AKA CrystalW@aol.com
Need a fix, but don't know where to start? Here's a few suggestions:
InfiNet's Cool Site of the Day
http://cool.infi.net
The Enhanced for Netscape Hall of Shame
http://www.meat.com/netscape_hos.html
c|net's Best of the Web
http://www.cnet.com/Content/Reviews/Website/
<-- b a c k
h o m e -->

(Figure 6) **Courier may not be a pretty type face, but it does allow for custom spacing using the <pre> tag.**

STEP 6 You might have noticed by now that most of my site is in Courier, the default monospaced font that is set up on my system. I decided to go with monospaced type because I like using spaces between text, and the uniform "spacers" of period, space, period, space, etc., to give a bit of visual variety. I accomplished this simply by using the <pre> and </pre> tags. I've also regularly used the horizontal rule tag <hr> to help break up text-heavy pages (Figure 6).

Also, I used consistently spaced-out letter titles; made the titles in the title bar match the titles on the page; and included a "mailto:" link (CrystalW@aol.com) on each page in case someone wants to send me an e-mail.

Last but not least, since this is the last page in my site, I've changed the "next" text to read home, and the link takes viewers back to the first page. Come on by. ■

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Crystal Waters - cool cool
links</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY BGCOLOR="000000" TEXT="FFFFFF"
LINK="FFFF99" VLINK="990000">

<pre>
<FONT SIZE=5>c o o l  c o o l  s i t e s
<hr>
<font size=-1>crystal waters AKA <a
href="mailto:crystalw@aol.com">CrystalW@aol.
com</a></pre>
<p>
<FONT SIZE=4>

Need a fix, but don't know where to start?
Here's a few suggestions:<p>

InfiNet's Cool Site of the Day<br>
 . . . . . <a target=window
href="http://cool.infi.net">http://cool.infi.
net</a><p>

The Enhanced for Netscape Hall of Shame <br>
 . . . . . <a target=window
href="http://www.meat.com/netscape_hos.html">
http://www.meat.com/netscape_hos.html</a><p>


c|net's Best of the Web<br>
 . . . . . <a target=window
href="http://www.cnet.com/Content/Reviews/
Website/">http://www.cnet.com/Content/Reviews
/Website/</a><hr>
<a href="crystalwb.html"><-- b a c k</a> . .
. . . . . <a
href="crystal.html">h o m e --></a>

</HTML>
```

Net Web Link

The site shown here can be found on *The Net*'s site at **http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/mag.html**, as well as on America Online's member Web page area, My Place (keyword: My Place). This site's URL in that area is **http://members.aol.com/crystalw/crystal.html**

FYI

Nearly all browsers allow you to view a Web page's code. Check under the "File" or "View" menu of your application. Once you view the code you wish to emulate, either save it to your disk, or cut and paste it into your HTML editor. Make sure you change the links and image names to reflect your content.

How To Spice Up Your Site

10 Easy Steps: From Backgrounds to Borders

Lynda Weinman

Most popular online service providers offer free Web space and guidance on how to create home pages. There are also lots of resources available on basic page creation (we collect many of them in the pages that follow). But what if you want a site that stands out from the standard, bland, generic-brand competition? Here are some tips that will take you beyond the basics.

STEP 1 Add a Background Color

Change the background color of your Web pages to something other than the default color of your browser. Just remember the "contrast and brightness" rule — if you're going to use a light background, choose dark type colors; use a dark background with light type.

Colors on the Web are specified by the hexadecimal translation of their RGB values. If you were to change the background of your page to white, which is Red:255, Green:255, Blue:255, the code would look like this:

```
<html>
<body bgcolor="#FFFFFF">
</body>
</html>
```

FFFFFF is the hexadecimal equivalent of R:255, G:255, B:255.

Here are some other hex value equivalents:

- Black — 000000
- Primary Blue — 0033FF
- Primary Red — CC0000
- Hot Pink — FF00CC
- Purple — 6600CC
- Lavender — 9966FF
- Primary Yellow — FFFF00
- Beige — CC9966
- Light Grey — CCCCCC
- Dark Grey — 666699
- Turquoise — 3333FF
- Primary Green — 00CC33

Web Resources

Web Stuff
http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/www.html

WWW & HTML Developer's JumpStation
http://oneworld.wa.com/htmldev/devpage/dev-page.html

WWW Home
http://www.w3.org/

WWW Publishing Techniques
http://www.cybermalls.com/.tools.html

WWW Manuals
http://tecfa.unige.ch/info-www.html

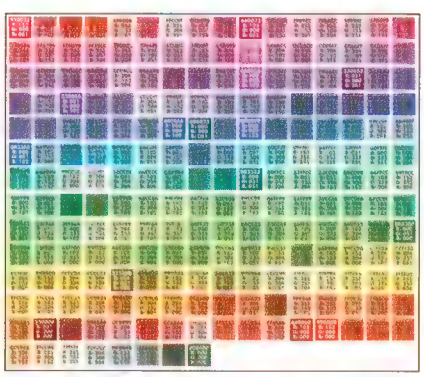
Yahoo's WWW Index
http://www.yahoo.com/

Yet Another How To Create Your Own Home Page
http://www.intergalact.com/hp/hp.html

— *Jeff Dawson*

Lots more Web design tips are found in Lynda Weinman's book, <designing web graphics> (New Riders Publishing 1996, ISBN: 1-56205-532-1).

Hexadecimal Colors



For a more thorough guide to hexadecimal colors, visit Lynda Weinman's Web site (http://www.earthlink.net/~lyndaw/bookmks.htm).

Net Web Link

For a more thorough guide to hexadecimal colors, check out our Web site at **http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/design/design.html**

STEP 2 Add a Background Pattern

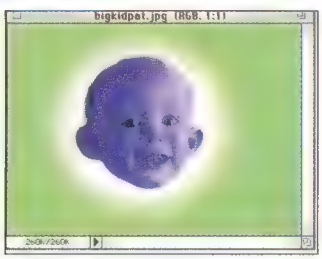
Adding a background pattern to your Web site involves using the HTML tag `<body background>`. Here's what the HTML code would look like:

```
<html>
<body
background="filename.gif">
</body>
```

Making the correct art for a pattern is more difficult than writing the simple code required for background HTML tags. Your file can be either a GIF or a JPEG. In general, save flat-colored, illustration-style artwork as GIFs. Save continuous tone, photographic-style artwork as JPEGs. The pattern source file's dimensions will dictate how many times the pattern will repeat on your page. A large tile will have fewer repeats than a small tile (see Figures 1-4).

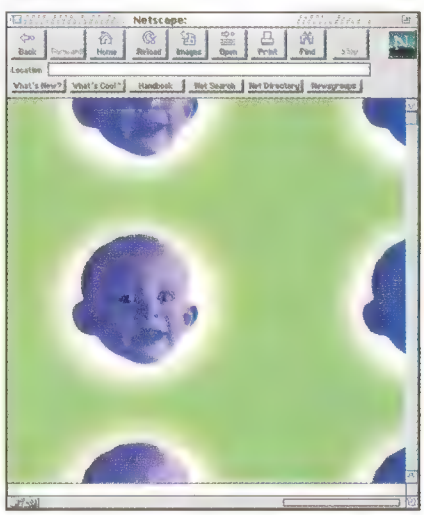
We published a seamless tile how-to in the September 1995 issue of *The Net* (**http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/back/0995/design/design.html**).

(Figure 1)



A large source tile image.

(Figure 2)

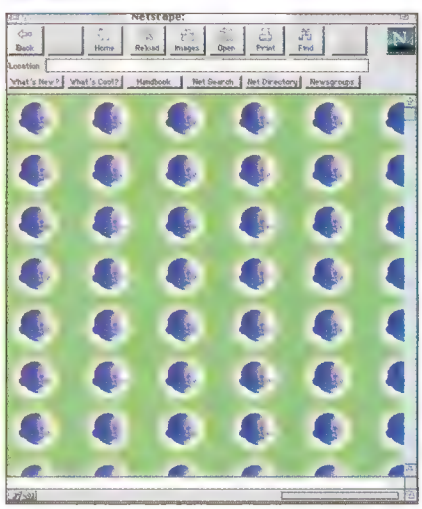


The resulting pattern from a large source tile. Note there are fewer repeats than you get with a smaller source tile image.

(Figure 3)

A small source tile image.

(Figure 4)



The resulting pattern from a small source tile. Note there are more repeats than you get with a large source file image.

Once again, remember the contrast and brightness rule, and make sure your pattern tiles have the same dark, light, or medium values, so that contrasting type colors will read easily against them.

Learning HTML

An Information Provider's Guide to HTML
http://www.vuw.ac.nz/~gnat/ideas/www-html.html

Beginner's Guide to HTML
http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/demoweb/html-primer.html

Composing Good HTML
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/Web/People/tilt/cgh/

Crash Course on Writing Documents for the Web
http://www.ziff.com/~eamonn/crash_course.html

How to Write HTML Files
http://www.ucc.ie/info/net/htmldoc.html

HTML Quick Reference Guide
http://kuhttp.cc.ukans.edu/lynx_help/HTML_quick.htm

HTML Reference Manual
http://www.sandia.gov/sci_compute/html_ref.html

HTML Tutorial
http://fire.clarkson.edu/doc/html/htut.html

Intro to HTML
http://melmac.corp.harris.com/about_html.html

Style Guide for Online Hypertext
http://www.w3.org/hypertext/WWW/Provider/Style/Overview.html

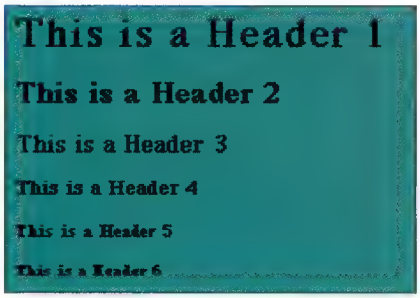
STEP 3 Add a **Different Text Sizes**

If your page has a lot of text, you might want to vary its size and styles, to make the text easier to read. Typographers usually put type into two categories: headline and body copy. Headline copy is typically larger (Figure 5), and is used to separate blocks of type or images. Body copy is usually smaller, and is used within blocks of text.

HTML header tag sizes increase or decrease the font size and make the affected type bold. They are usually reserved for headlines. HTML font size tags increase or decrease the font size, and can be adjusted in the middle of a word or sentence without affecting anything else within the tag. These tags can be used for headlines or body type (Figure 6). Here are some tags to use to change the text's style:

Italicizing text:	`<em>` or `<i>`
Making text bold	`<b>` or `<strong>`
Pre-formatted text:	`<pre>`
Using a monospace font	`<code>`

(Figure 5)



Here's an example of how header size tags display in Netscape.

(Figure 6)

And here is an example of how font size tags appear in Netscape.

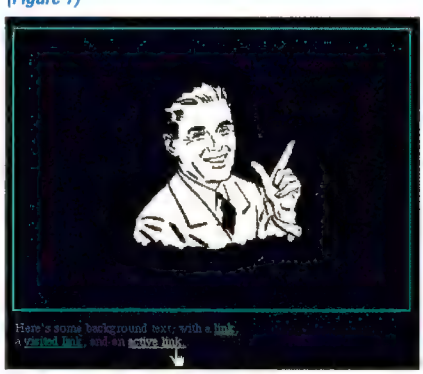
STEP 4 Change the **Color** of Your **Text and Links**

Changing the color of text and links is another way to add visual interest to your Web pages. You can control the color of basic text, text links, visited text links (links that have already been accessed), and active links (the color of the text when the mouse is depressed in the down position of a click). Hexadecimal code equivalents of RGB values are used within these tags, as in the case of background colors.

Here is the sample code that would allow you to change the text colors in your HTML document. Below (Figure 7) is what a page would look like if you use a hexadecimal code to change the colors of your Web page.

```
<html>
<body bgcolor="#000000" text
="#9933FF" link ="#33FFFF"
 alink="#CCFFFF"
vlink="#009999">
<a
href="http://www.domain.com"
><img src="man.gif"></a><p>
Here s some background
text, with a <a
href="http://www.domain1.com
>link</a>,<br> a <a
href="http://www.domain2.com
>visited link</a>, and an
<a
href="http://www.domain3.com
>active link.</a>.
</body>
</html>
```

(Figure 7)



The results of the text and links color codes.

More Resources

Adobe & Apple's "Pagemill" Software Site
http://www2.apple.com/pagemill/

Art and the Zen of Web Sites
http://www.tlc-systems.com/webtips.shtml

Comprehensive Guide to Publishing on the Web
http://www.webcom.com/~webcom/html/

HTML Writers Guild Home Page
http://www.synet.net/hwg/

Making Your Mark in the WWW
http://www.hypermall.com/tk/www-program.html

Technicalities Home Page
http://www.mecklerweb.com/mags/iw/tech/www.htm

The Web Developers Journal
http://www.awa.com/net/software/eleclead.html

The Web Developers Virtual Library
http://WWW.Stars.com/

WebCom Site
http://www.webcom.com/html/

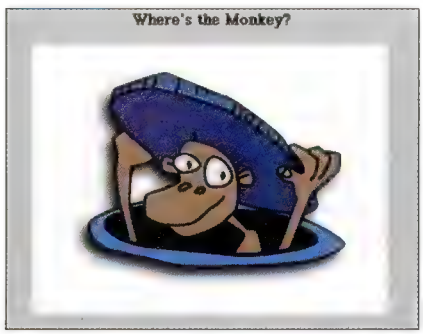
— *Jeff Dawson*

STEP 5 Making Irregular Shapes, Using Transparency or Background Color

Images on the Web are always stored in rectangular file shapes, but you can beat the system if you make irregularly shaped artwork and "cheat" the background color so that it matches that of your Web page. This easy trick will create the illusion that your site has irregularly shaped images. But you need to know how to code the background color of your browser to match the background color of your irregularly shaped image.

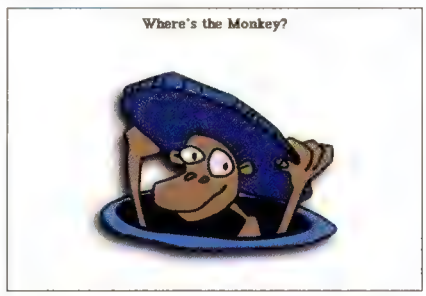
Try using the <body color> tag described previously, or the <body background> tag, and make a solid color swatch for your pattern file. It's easiest to create irregularly shaped artwork against a solid color Web page (Figure 9). If you want to create irregularly shaped artwork that will layer over a background image containing a pattern or tile, you'll need to create transparent GIFs. The GIF89a file format allows users to designate a single color that will disappear and show through to a patterned background once the file is viewed from a Web page (Figure 10). You will need software that saves GIFs in the GIF89a file format (find out where to get it at **http://www.lynda.com**). Also, check out our review of this subject at **http://www.thenet-usa.com/mag/back/1195/design/design.html**.

(Figure 8)



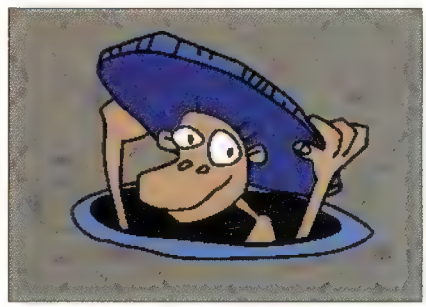
An example of a default gray Web background color, with an image against white.

(Figure 9)



The same image on a Web page that's better integrated, using the same (white) background color.

(Figure 10)



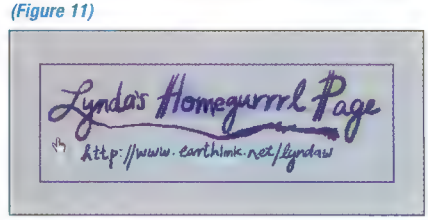
The same image as a transparent GIF against a patterned background.

STEP 6 Changing the Color of Borders Around Links

If you use images instead of text to link to other pages, those images will have a colored rectangular border around them (Figures 11, 12, and 13), unless you know the code to change it. These colored borders are mostly a good thing, because they signal to the viewer that the image is "hot," or linked. Sometimes, though, they can be a bad thing, if you've put effort into making the artwork look like it has an irregular shape. In that case, you'll want to use a linked image with no border (Figure 14). Here's some HTML code to help:

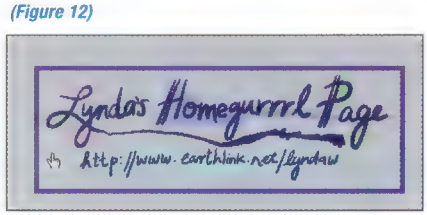
To exaggerate the border (Figure 12): border=5
To change the color of a border (Figure 13): border="#330066"(or any hex value)
To eliminate the border (Figure 14): border=0

(Figure 11)



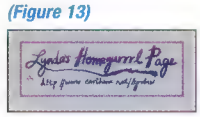
A default rectangle around a linked image.

(Figure 12)



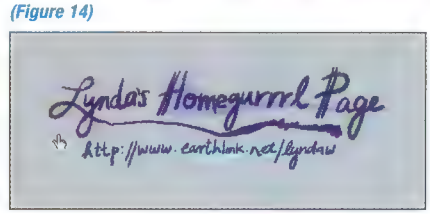
An exaggerated border using the border=5 tag.

(Figure 13)



A colored border using the border=hex value tag.

(Figure 14)



A linked image with no border using the border=0 tag.

STEP 7 Text and Image Alignment

You can also add variety to a predictable page by changing the default alignment settings of text and images (Figure 19). Here are some HTML alignment codes. Figures 15-18 show how their use will affect your page.

`<p>` Adds space between lines of text or images

`<br>` Forces a break at the end of a line of text

`<pre>` Changes the font to a monospace font and accepts custom spacing

`<nobr>` Allows type to continue without a break

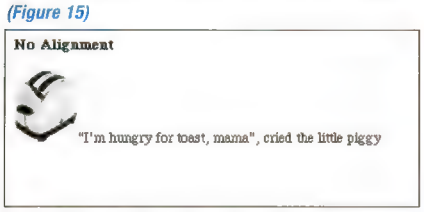
`<blink>` Causes type to blink (use with extreme caution; this tag is a known irritant)

`<img src="filename.gif" align=bottom>`
Aligns text to the bottom of an image (Figure 18)

`<img src="filename.gif" align=middle>`
Aligns text to the middle of an image (Figure 19)

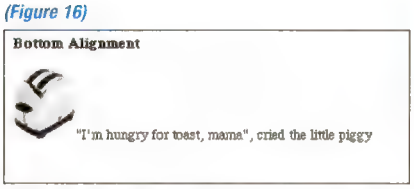
`<img src="filename.gif" align=top>`
Aligns text to the top of an image (Figure 20)

(Figure 15)



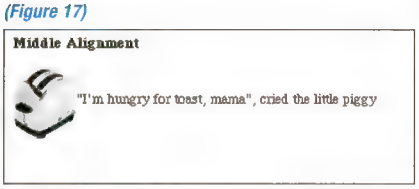
No text alignment tags were used here.

(Figure 16)



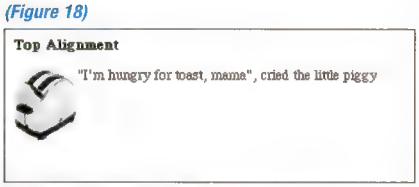
The tags to make the text align at the bottom of the image were used.

(Figure 17)



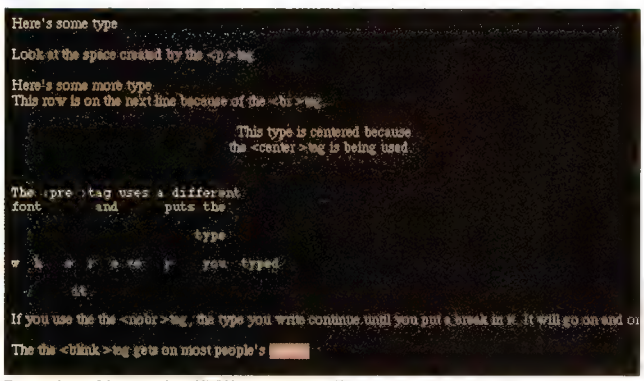
The tags to make the text align at the middle of the image were used.

(Figure 18)



The tags to make the text align at the bottom of the image were used.

(Figure 19)


Here's some type
Look at the space created by the <p> tag
Here's some more type
This row is on the next line because of the <br> tag
This type is centered because the tag is being used
The <pre> tag uses a different font and puts the type
If you use the the <nobr> tag, the type you write continue until you put a break in it. It will go on and on
The the <blink> tag gets on most people's

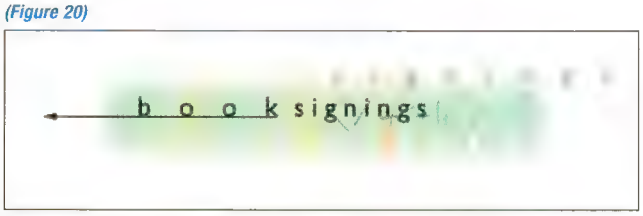
Examples of how using HTML tags that affect text will look on your page.

STEP 8 Images for Typography

Let's face it, HTML text is an eye sore. A Web page designer, sadly, has limited control over fonts, sizes, and spacing. If you want to make your typography in an outside program, you can improve on HTML's dismal starting point, and use your own artwork as a substitute by using the <img src> tag. Here is an example of how to do this:

```
<html>
<img
src="bs.jpg">
```

(Figure 20)



Here's an example of a graphic that includes a more interesting type treatment than can be generated using HTML. It can be found at http://www.earthlink.com/~lyndaw/bs.html.

Neat Additions for Your Page

3D Web Illustration and Page Composition
http://www.sonic.net/mmcs/artgallery/

Clip Art Collection
http://leviathan.tamu.edu:70/1s/clipart

Design Link
http://www.designlink.com

Icons and Images for Use in HTML Documents
http://www.infi.net/~rdralph/icons/

Internet Audit Counter
http://www.internet-audit.com/

Multimedia and Clip Art
http://www.iec.sfsu.edu/multimedia/multimedia.html

Psyched Up Graphics
http://www.econ.cbs.dk/people/nagemal/psyched/index.html

Terry Gould's Graphics
http://www.netaccess.on.ca/~kestral/list.html

Textures!
http://www.primenet.com/~robhood/textures.html

— *Jeff Dawson*

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STEP 9 Make Custom **Horizontal Rules**

Horizontal rules can be changed within their HTML confines, or created as artwork and inserted into Web pages using the `<img src>` tag. Figures 21-25 show some examples of what you can do with rules on your page.

(Figure 21)

The results of <hr width=25>.

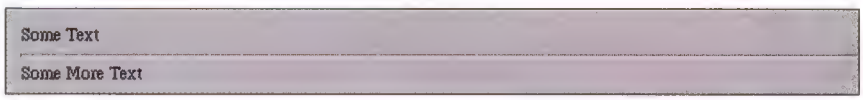
(Figure 22)

The results of <hr size=10>.

(Figure 23)

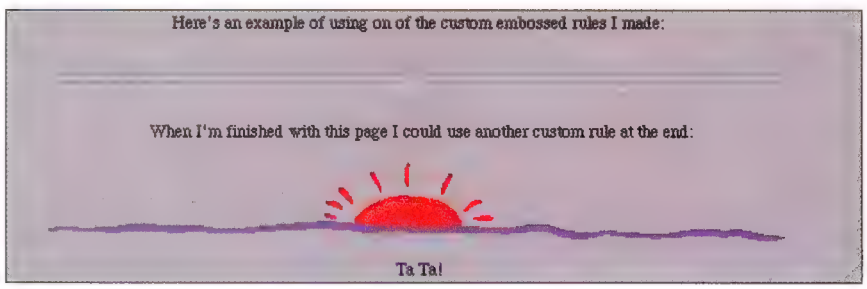
The results of <hr size=25 width=25>.

(Figure 24)



The results of <hr>.

(Figure 25)


Here's an example of using on of the custom embossed rules I made:
When I'm finished with this page I could use another custom rule at the end:
Ta Ta!

The results of custom-generated horizontal rules.

How-To's & Advice for Personal Home Page Makers

Ask Dr. Web
http://WWW.Stars.com/Dr.Web/

Creating Net Sites
http://home.mcom.com/assist/net_sites/index.html

Direct Connection
http://www.dircon.co.uk/dircon/wwwedit.htm

Hints for Building Web Sites
http://www.interport.net/~tkarp/webtips.html

Hitchhikers Guide to the Worldwide Web
http://web.cs.city.ac.uk/pgg/guide.html

HomePage Construction Set Packing List
http://nyx10.cs.du.edu:8001/~esaski/hpcs/welcome.html

Package: To Create Your Own Homepage
http://www.booksite.com/package.html

Spider School
http://www.tmn.com/Oh/Community/Kanter/rtfm.html

Spinning the Web
http://powerglobalnews.com/stw/stw/home.htm

Style Your Sheet
http://www.links.net/webpub/style.html

The El Cheapo Web Page
http://www.oanet.com/homepage/darryls/Cheapo.html

Templates for Web Pages
http://www.duke.edu/websrv/templ/

The Web Kitchen
http://www.gnofn.org/%7Enano/WebKitchen/

Tobin's Hot Links
http://bongo.gsfc.nasa.gov/Hotlist.html#www

Top Ten Ways to Tell if You Have a Sucky Web Page
http://www.winternet.com/~jmg/topten.html

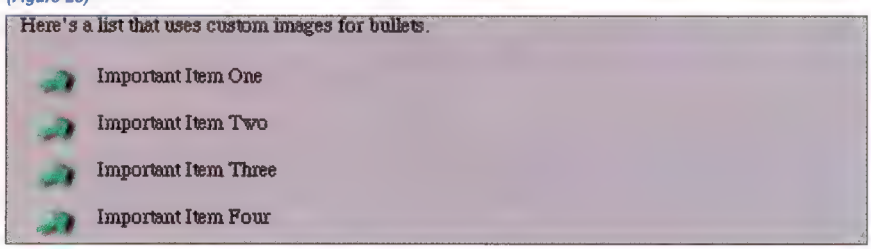
Web Weavers Warren
http://fox.nstn.ca/tmonk/weaver/weaver.html

— *Jeff Dawson*

STEP Make Custom **Bullet Icons**

Bullets are typically used in lists, and can be generated within HTML code specifications (Figure 26). An alternative is to make artwork in a paint program, save it as a GIF or JPEG, and include it in a list using the `<img src>` and `<p>` tags. ■

(Figure 26)


Here's a list that uses custom images for bullets.
Important Item One
Important Item Two
Important Item Three
Important Item Four

Here's an example of custom bullet art inserted into the HTML document by using the <img src> and <p> tags.

Down with HTML!

An Alternative Way to Publish Web Pages

Todd Marshall

It's a common problem: You have an excellent idea for a Web page, a bunch of art and video clips, and a library of links to offer, but you haven't quite polished your knowledge of all those arcane HTML commands. What to do? Though half a dozen companies offer special ways of making HTML-less Web pages, most of these methods are even harder to master than coding by hand. Macromedia's Shockwave requires you to know Director. Lingo is a difficult scripting language. Creating VRML pages is still a mystery to most. And, although it shows a lot of promise, Borland's upcoming Latte (a visual programming tool for the Java language) will still be geared more toward programmers than artists. What to do? Read on.

An Alternative to HTML

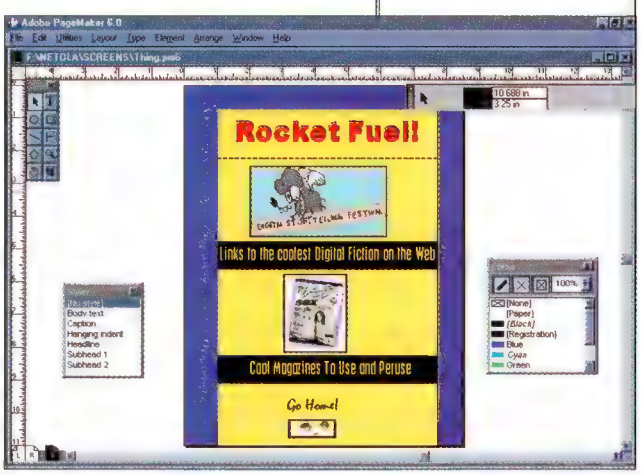
You'll probably want to check out Adobe's Acrobat Exchange, available for about $130. It's an incredibly simple utility to master that lets you create and edit PDF (Portable Document Format) documents. You just design a page, drawing, or whatever, and select "Print." But this command, rather than causing something to be printed out on paper, results in your "printing" the file into Acrobat's PDF — an "electronic document" that everyone else can view, regardless of which fonts they have or even which computer platform they use, so long as they have Adobe's free Acrobat Reader (which you can get from Adobe's Web site at **http://www.adobe.com/**). Once you've converted a 10-page newsletter, for instance, anyone with the viewer can view that document at a number of different sizes, search for any text in the document, or print it. Plus, Acrobat files are usually much smaller than the original file — often less than half its size.

Now the good part. By the time this magazine is in your lap, Adobe promises to be offering a free Netscape plug-in that will view Acrobat files right in Netscape (see sidebar below for more info on Adobe Acrobat plug-ins). What does that mean to you? To create a Web page, all you need to do is design something in your favorite page layout program, include all the funky pictures and fonts you

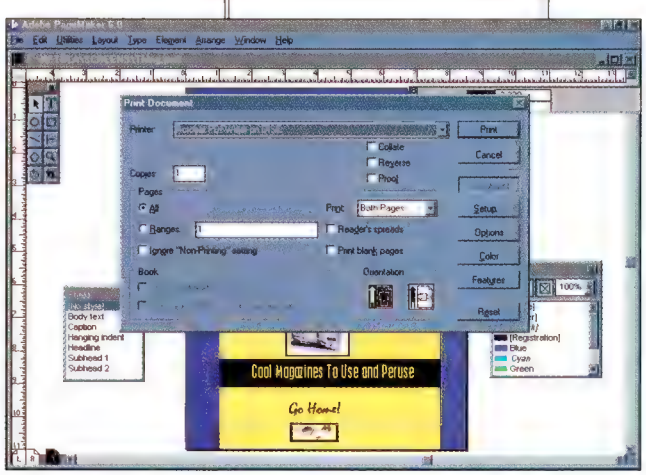
continued...

Using Adobe Acrobat
It's a simple, three-step process to use Adobe Acrobat:

1 First, open up the file that you wish to make into an Adobe PDF file. In this case, we're using a PageMaker 6.0 file for Windows.



2 Choose the "Print" option from your application. Note in this screenshot that the "printer" chosen is Adobe PDF Writer. When you choose "Save" or "OK," your file is saved to disk in Adobe PDF format.



can think of, and then convert it into a PDF file. Presto! You've built yourself a Web page without having had to do a lick of HTML. Also, with Exchange, you can implement hyperlinks to other Web pages in the document, and also link to other parts of the document, and embed QuickTime or AVI movies and sounds, as well.

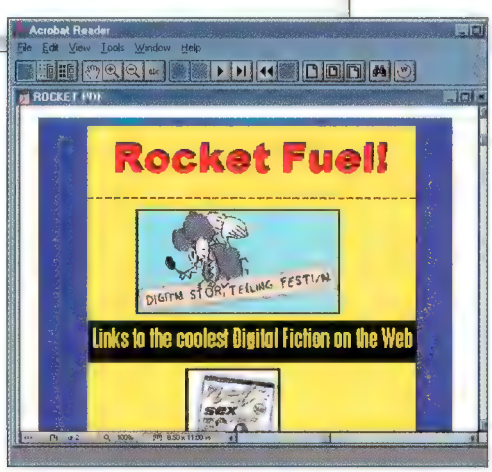
Pluses and Some Minuses

Sound too cool to be true? Well, Acrobat does have its shortcomings, of course. For one, all those cool little tricks you can do in HTML (like creating blinking text and multi-loading graphics) aren't possible. Also, for now, you can't have an Acrobat document be part of an HTML document. It's either Acrobat or nothing. Your site can have a mix of HTML and Acrobat documents, but they can't be put on the same page. Also, Acrobat might make it desirable for people to start putting in all the graphics and crazy fonts they can think of — which will have the unfortunate effect of making an Acrobat file huge, and no fun to download. The plus side is that Acrobat ramps up your artistic capabilities big-time. Rather than having to rely on a few bland HTML fonts, you can have any font you can think of to use on your Web site.

You can also format and design your page any way you like. Think of it this way: Anything you can dream up in your favorite page layout program can become a Web page. Just as long as you don't go overboard, the file size will be pretty small — around 5K to 30K. Depending on what you're doing, it can also save you some time. Even if you can code HTML in your sleep, Acrobat is a nice alternative for graphic and design freedom. ■

3

Here's our file being viewed through Acrobat Reader, a free utility available from Adobe's site (**http://www.adobe.com/**). Reader is available for Windows 3.1, NT, and 95, as well as for the Mac, Sun SPARC stations, HP platforms, and SGI.

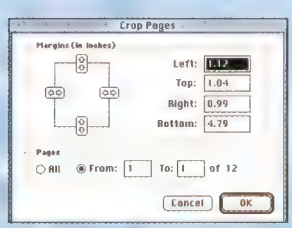


Adobe Acrobat Plug-Ins
http://www.adobe.com/Acrobat/Plug-Ins/

Adobe Acrobat Exchange allows easy transformation of current pages into documents that can be viewed on any platform, as long as the viewer uses the Acrobat Reader. While Exchange will create a PDF file in three easy steps, there are also a number of plug-ins available to add more functionality to the files created within Exchange. Here are a couple of handy examples; more are available for download from the Web site above.

SuperCrop Plug-In

SuperCrop is a simple plug-in that allows you to crop off areas of a PDF file that you don't want to show up. For example, let's say you only wish to show half of a page — just drag and drop the arrows to surround the area that you wish to remain, and you're in business. SuperCrop is available for Mac and Windows.



To crop PDF files, try SuperCrop, a simple plug-in.

WebLink Plug-In

WebLink give Adobe Exchange the ability to add URL hotlinks to PDF documents — which is obviously ideal, since that's what the Web is about. WebLink is available for Mac and Windows.

Want URLs in your PDF document? Use WebLink.

What You Need To Know to Get Going

Building for HTML

Kathy Tafel

The past year has seen Web creation software merge from simple text processors with a few tricks up their sleeves to master Web-making machines such as PageMill. Looking for a way to create pages that doesn't involve spending tons of time typing tags? Here's a resource list of applications.

Cross-platform

HotMetal Pro

http://www.sq.com/

Features spell-checking and tools for working with graphics ($195 U.S.; for Windows, Sun, HP, IBM RS6000, Solaris, SGI, DEC, and Mac).

NaviPress

http://www.navisoft.com/index.htm

NaviPress offers easy HTML editing and Web page publishing with its NaviService (free; for Windows, Mac, and Sun).

Netscape Navigator Gold 2.0

http://home.netscape.com/comprod/products/navigator/version_2.0/gold.html

This environment will edit all Navigator extensions, including frames (Note: not released at press time; for Windows, Mac, and Unix).

Windows

WebAuthor

http://www.qdeck.com/qdeck/products/WebAuthr/

Turns Word for Windows into an HTML document creation tool. Uses dialogs to add form elements. ($69.95 U.S. list, $45.00 U.S. street).

FrontPage

http://www.microsoft.com/msoffice/frontpage/intro.htm

Microsoft develops another product by purchasing a company! FrontPage includes many templates, wizards, and CGI interactivity ($695 U.S.). NOTE: At press time, a Mac version was promised sometime in 1996.

HotDog

http://www.sausage.com/

HotDog implements HTML 3.0 through a drag-and-drop interface (standard, $29.95; professional, $99.95).

HTMLed Pro

http://www.ist.ca/htmledpro/

Has a drag-and-drop form builder, as well as a visual table builder ($99.95 U.S.; $69.95 U.S. educational price).

Macintosh

Lindsay Davies HTML Extensions for BBEdit

http://www.tiac.net/biz/bbsw/

These extensions now include a floating palette, color picking, and table tags ($119 U.S.).

World Wide Web Weaver

http://www.northnet.org/best/

Allows the instant addition of new HTML tags through its extensible architecture ($50 U.S.; $30 U.S. educational price).

HTML Pro

http://www.ts.umu.se:80/~r2d2/

Uses one window for editing HTML and one for WYSIWYG viewing. Extra bonus points for those who read Swedish ($5 U.S. shareware — hey it's the cheapest!). ■

The Thrill of HTML

Kathy Tafel

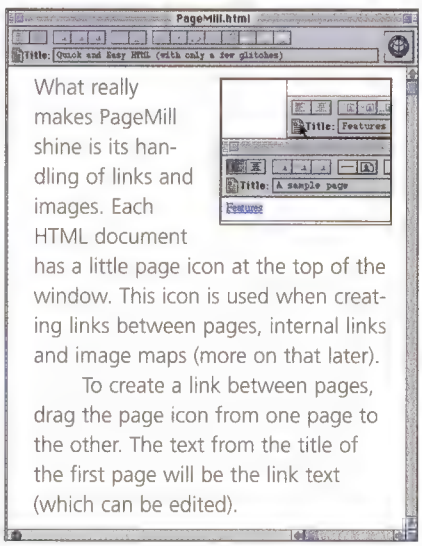
HTML editing has come a long way in the last year. While die-hard Web masters will probably continue to use text editors, most designers have switched to some kind of WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) HTML editor. Early incarnations of WYSIWYG editors were clunky at best, and buggy at worst. The current crop of editors, however, offer drag-and-drop editing, templates, wizards, and integration with CGI (Common Gateway Interface) applications like image maps.

Adobe's **PageMill**

PageMill (**http://www.adobe.com/Apps/PageMill/**) is my current favorite of the lot (see page 48 for more HTML editors). One of the most innovative HTML editors ever to be released, PageMill is available, at the time of this writing, for the Mac. A Windows version is expected soon, though no arrival date had been announced as we went to press.

PageMill is intuitive, fast, and full of features. The drag-and-drop editor makes importing text from other programs easier. PageMill will transparently convert non-standard ASCII characters, like é, ü, and ø, to their HTML equivalents (`é`, `ü`, and `ø`). There's no need to remember obscure codes for these characters, or to be continuously connected to a site that lists them. Formatting headings and other text formatting is also a breeze.

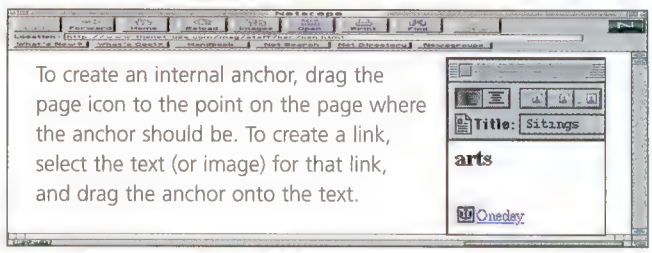
Creating Links



What really makes PageMill shine is its handling of links and images. Each HTML document has a little page icon at the top of the window. This icon is used when creating links between pages, internal links and image maps (more on that later).

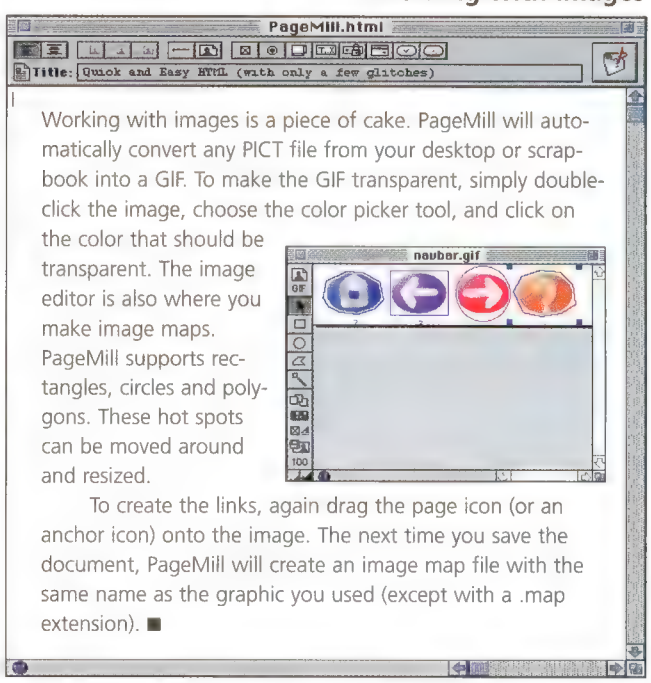
To create a link between pages, drag the page icon from one page to the other. The text from the title of the first page will be the link text (which can be edited).

Creating Anchors



To create an internal anchor, drag the page icon to the point on the page where the anchor should be. To create a link, select the text (or image) for that link, and drag the anchor onto the text.

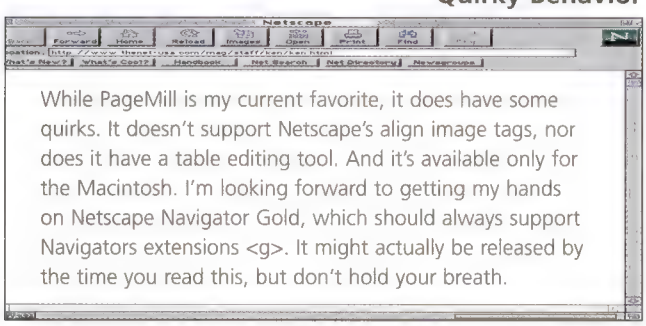
Working with Images



Working with images is a piece of cake. PageMill will automatically convert any PICT file from your desktop or scrapbook into a GIF. To make the GIF transparent, simply double-click the image, choose the color picker tool, and click on the color that should be transparent. The image editor is also where you make image maps. PageMill supports rectangles, circles and polygons. These hot spots can be moved around and resized.

To create the links, again drag the page icon (or an anchor icon) onto the image. The next time you save the document, PageMill will create an image map file with the same name as the graphic you used (except with a .map extension). ■

Quirky Behavior



While PageMill is my current favorite, it does have some quirks. It doesn't support Netscape's align image tags, nor does it have a table editing tool. And it's available only for the Macintosh. I'm looking forward to getting my hands on Netscape Navigator Gold, which should always support Navigators extensions <g>. It might actually be released by the time you read this, but don't hold your breath.

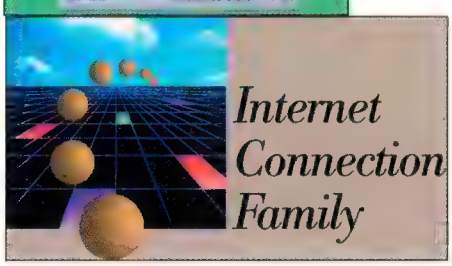
Are You Being **Served?**

Crystal Waters

If you're looking to set up a Web server, you have many options. Basically, Web servers can be set up on a variety of platforms, including DOS, Windows, Windows NT, Macintosh, and Unix. For many years, the prevailing operating environment of the net was Unix, and we could probably safely say that most Gopher, FTP, and WWW sites are still running on Unix machines.

Easy-to-Use Software

More and more people and organizations are turning to PCs as trustworthy servers, however, now that software for personal computers has become more hardy and easier to use, and personal computers and their accompanying software packages are generally much less expensive than their Unix platform counterparts. Even if you decide to buy the highest-end Pentium or Power Macintosh available, you'll get a great deal for your money compared to what you'll have to spend for a brand-name Unix server.



Apple, Digital, and IBM each offer attractive Internet server packages.

The most popular operating system for running Web servers is the Sun platform — SunOS and Solaris combined make up 31.4 percent of the market, according to the Internet WWW Site Survey (**http://www.mirai.com/survey**), which was compiled in October 1995. Second in line is the Mac OS, at 17 percent; at a close third comes Windows (Windows and Windows NT combined) at 14.2 percent. The advent of "Internet server solution" packages — such as the Apple Internet Server Solution (**http://product.info.apple.com/productinfo/datasheets/ss/internetserverforwww.html**) and Digital Equipment Corporation's AlphaServer series (**http://www.digital.com:80/info/internet/brochure/ialphasrv_abstract.html**) — has made "instant" and affordable Web serving a reality. Such packages will probably help increase the share of personal computer percentages in future Internet WWW Site surveys. These high-end hardware systems are packed with ready-to-roll software packages. Digital's Easy Web Server (**http://www.digital.com/info/internet/brochure/easywebsrv_abstract.html**), a "lower-end" instant-Internet system, can get you running a site quickly, and at a price of only a few thousand dollars.

Stay with a **Platform** You Know

One piece of advice: If you want to set up a server for a small- to- medium-sized business, stick to a platform you already know. In fact, if you're not familiar with a particular platform, you're better off putting your business' site on your service provider's server. There are many Internet service providers that offer this option — some for free; some for a fee per megabyte. True, you may have to pay for server space, but if you don't have a dedicated person to maintain your server, then you're up a creek. ■

Resources for Finding out More about Web Servers and Server Software

Before you go hardware shopping, check out these resources and talk to your Internet service provider about its server services:

Sites Where You Can Get Free Web Pages
http://www.serve.com/jpsp1/freeweb/sites.html

SingNet World Wide Web
http://oneworld.wa.com/htmldev/devpage/dev-page.html

The Web Developer's Virtual Library
http://www.stars.com/Vlib/

CERN Information
http://www.w3.org/

NCSA Information
http://hoohoo.ncsa.uiuc.edu/

Netscape Server Solutions
http://home.netscape.com/comprod/server_central/index.html

IBM Internet Connection Solutions
http://www.raleigh.ibm.com/icf/icfprod.html

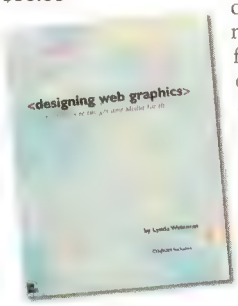
Getting Professional Help: Web Creation and Design Books

Wayne Cunningham

The knowledge needed to create a Web page can be found in that old, Guttenberg-enhanced, off-line medium known as hard copy... or books, to those of you over 25. Here are six books that provide help of one sort or another, whether you want to learn how to code HTML, make graphics, or set up a server. Each book is given a freshness quotient (FQ, with 5 signifying very fresh and 1 signifying stale), because the rapidly changing world of the Web makes fresh information a vital quality of any net-related book.

Designing Web Graphics

Lynda Weinman
New Riders 800 428 5331
ISBN: 1-56205-532-1
$50.00



This book doesn't delve into the sys admin side of things; instead, it focuses on the specific techniques needed to design Web-friendly graphics. If you've ever been stuck waiting for a page to load because it has a 200k graphic, you've met the Web-unfriendly variety. HTML and scripting are touched upon, but only in the context of how the graphics fit in. The price is a bit high, but may be justified because there is no other book like it. Plus, it has a well-stocked CD-ROM for both Mac and Windows authors. **FQ 5**

The Web Page Design Cookbook

William Horton,
Lee Taylor,
Arthur Ignacio,
Nancy Hoft
John Wiley & Sons
212 850 6497
ISBN: 0-471-13039-7
$34.95

A book for artists instead of programmers, *The Web Page Design Cookbook* assumes someone else is maintaining the servers that will house your Web site. The contents of the book run the gamut. You'll learn how to design for big and small sites, as well as for personal and corporate purposes. The accompanying CD-ROM has all sorts of helpful software for Windows, Mac, Unix, and OS/2. Unfortunately, important tricks like server push/pull are merely mentioned, with no explanation. **FQ 3**

Serving the Web

Coriolis Group
Robert Jon Murdry
800 410 0192
ISBN: 1-883577-30-6
$39.99

An excellent resource concerned with the ins and outs of building a Web site. You'll find very specific information on how to choose servers, and write HTML and CGI scripts. The book even includes a little information about future technologies like Java and VRML. The writing is personable and interesting, and the included CD-ROM is packed with software. **FQ 3**

Running a Perfect Web Site

David M. Chandler
Que Corporation
800 428 5331
ISBN: 0-7897-0210-x
$39.99

A book that focuses on the site behind the HTML, this one includes a list of leased line providers for that essential element of a site — a link to the Internet. The Unix and Windows focus extends to the included CD-ROM, which has a lot of very useful software. Scripts for forms and database integration are discussed. **FQ 2**

It's No Secret

None of the HTML tags are secret. All of them can be found on the Web. Netscape maintains a free design guide on its site (**http://home.mcom.com/assist/net_sites/index.html**).

Web Publishers Design Guide

for Windows
Mary Jo Fahey, Jeffrey Brown
Coriolis Group Books
800 410 0192
ISBN: 1-883577-61-6 **$34.99**
for Macintosh
Mary Jo Fahey
ISBN: 1-883577-63-2 **$34.99**

Although not particularly whimsical in style, this book is an extremely practical guide for graphic artists who want to learn how to create a Web site. Full of very down-to-earth information about how to create graphics for Web pages, plus all the neat HTML tags needed to design professional pages, this book comes in two flavors, Windows and Mac (sorry, Unix heads). CD-ROM included. **FQ 5**

Build A Web Site

Devra Hall
Prima Online Books
916 632 4400
ISBN: 0-7615-0064-2
$34.95

Just about everything you need to know about setting up a Web site is included in this 715-page, dryly written, massive brick of text. The target audience seems to be hard-core programmers who know virtually nothing about the Internet. The book sweeps along from concepts of the Web, to tips on setting up server software, and writing HTML and CGI code. It ends with a walk-through on how to write your own client software. Heavy duty. **FQ 2** ■

Finding a Host With the Most

Jeff Dawson

How do you find a place to display your Web page? A huge field of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) from which to choose beckons. Every time you turn around, another ISP has popped up.

All these ISPs are eagerly looking for ways to expand their customer bases. Many are offering open-ended connect charges as low as $12 a month, with a $50, one-time sign-up fee. ISPs in metropolitan areas are increasingly giving you options for everything from page creation to hit counting and a listing of your page on major Internet search engines.

Start the Search

To find the right ISP to house your home page, the best first step is to ask your friends. Even better, try the old-fashioned way — local print media. That's right. Pay attention to ads, leaf through the Yellow Pages, check your local weekly tabloids, and look at flyers put out by companies themselves.

You may, of course, skip the paper-based sources and search for ISPs on the net itself. Looking through search engines seems an obvious answer, but the success rate is spotty. Web indices for service providers are not fabulous. Perhaps the avalanche of providers is simply overwhelming the indexers. Yahoo! (**http:// www.yahoo.com/**), though, is always a good bet.

If you don't mind spending some money, Next Online (http://www.next.com.au/) has great home page services. You'll find find lists of ISPs at:
• Internet Service Providers Directory (http://www.commerce.net/directories/products/isp/),
• Homes Internet Magazine (http://www.homesmag.odc.com/ht_providers/providers.html),
• Celestin (http://www.celestin.com/pocia/index.html), and
• Internet Access Providers Around the World (http://www.earth.org/~lips/).

As of midwinter 1996, it listed 1,323 providers, organized by state, then city. But these listings will likely only be useful to you if you live in a major metropolitan area. What to do if you're dwelling in a quieter, more remote community?

Home Page Sources

A great way to find the right ISP is to start noticing the credits of Web pages you like. If it's a personal page, send an e-mail to the creator and ask for advice. If it's a commercial site, you can often do the same. Many home pages "advertise" the server they were created on.

For instance, I really liked the Spyfood site (**http://www.next.com.au/spyfood/index.html**). A quick scroll to the bottom informed me that Next Online (**http://www.next.com.au/**) serves the site.

Home page sources, in fact, may be your ultimate guide, since you'll get to quickly see what the ISP has to offer.

Be prepared to find a lot of different price models out there when you're contemplating a host ISP for your Web page. Next Online, for instance, will help you create a fancy, doodad-packed extravaganza your visitors will drool over. But the basic package totals a few thousand dollars. The hourly rate for design alone is $120.

On the other hand, Sirius Connections, a San Francisco Bay Area ISP, provides a service called Your Own Web Page (**http://www.sirius.com/~pwillow/**). The basic model costs $99. It gives you a simple format, with a picture/logo of your choice on your home page, plus three link buttons to three different pages, and a picture of your choice on each page (which is two screens long). An extra page is $20, while extra links are $5 each. Extra scanning, typing, art work, or custom page design are charged at the rate of $30 an hour.

Of course, the result of a service like this is a very plain page. So, be sure to check out a number of ISPs before you make your decision. ■

What to Look for in a Host for Your Web Site:

Mandatory

- PPP and shell dial-up Internet access at speeds up to 33 Kbps
- Unlimited dial-up usage for individuals
- Web directories for your personal and business Web pages
- E-mail
- Minimum of 3 Megabytes of storage for your Web pages and e-mail
- Online technical support
- FTP directories for software distribution
- CGI access for advanced Web programming

Useful Options

- Domain name service
- Multi-homed Web space
- E-mail to alpha-pager gateway
- ISDN dial-up access at speeds up to 128 Kbps
- Dedicated server hosting
- ISDN and analog dedicated connectivity

Designers for Rent:
Hiring an Expert to Create Your Pages

Jeff Dawson

Hiring someone to create a home page is not simply a matter of scrolling through a catalogue — at least not yet. But it's not like you have to hack your way through the technological wilds, either. Designers have marked the cyber turf, staked flags, and are ready to help you make your own digital island — for a price.

Keep in mind that, at least for now, most of the pros aren't geared to individuals with individual-sized pocketbooks. This isn't surprising. Most of us folks with a hankering for a home page don't have the deep coffers that big businesses have — so there's slim profit for designers to create a stripped-down page for many individuals. But don't despair. There are still tons of graphic designers out there ready to pick up bucks.

Finding a good site designer who's willing to create a page for you without charging a lot is not as easy as it sounds. Still, there are some options, among them 8oz Publishing, World Wide exPress, Webgal, adams apple, and Avery John Technologies. (Check the sidebar for the URLs of their sites). And don't forget to visit the Top Ten Ways To Tell if You Have a Sucky Web Page site before posting your home page for all to see.

Tips and Tactics

Just as when you're searching for the right Internet Service Provider (see page 52), you'd do best to start your quest for a designer-for-hire by paying attention to the credits of Web pages you like.

The next best course is go to your favorite index. Most of the large search indices have lists, usually under "Web Page Design." Yahoo has around 859 designers listed (**http://search.yahoo.com/bin/search?p=Web+Page+Design**). The descriptive squibs do not always provide great guidance in helping you decide which company is a good choice, particularly if you're on a budget. If you get the feeling that every designer is aiming to nab the Seagram's or MTV accounts, you're right. That's where the money is!

Still, you'll run across many home page producers who are geared to the lesser demands of a single person. Whomever you hire, take the time to ask for references. No big deal, just visit some of the pages already done. If you're not impressed, keep looking. Be a polite shopper and say something innocuous like, "Thank you." Who knows? You may be back some day when the designer has a sale on 3D textured buttons.

Also, be careful about billing. It's very easy to end up spending much more than you'd originally budgeted. And, the best designers work at a generally strict hourly rate. Some even charge for consultation, so doing some of your own research will pay off. Of course, as in every competitive sport, those seeking to put up a Web page will want to check in the mirror for their cool quotient. Best place to begin is to visit Top Ten Ways to Tell if You Have a Sucky Web Page (**http://www.winternet.com/~jmg/topten.html**). ■

Inexpensive Web Designers

8oz Publishing
http://www.8oz.com/
"It's your Web, we just live in it."

A Home for Your Webpage
http://www.ahome.com/
Inexpensive provider with design options.

adams apple communications group
http://www.adamsapple.com/
Mostly for small biz.

Avery John Technologies
http://www.mordor.com/averyjohn/
Hip, small shop with 60's feel.

AZC.Com
http://www.azc.com/
Clean, well-designed work.

Fresh Flavor Publishing
http://WWW1.Minn.Net/~pnatto/fresh.html
Affordable custom work.

GNN — Whole Internet Catalogue Business Pages
http://www.elc.gnn.com/bus/index.html
Looking for a designer? Check here.

HomePage Maker
http://www.rscnet.com/
The title says it all.

Human Computer Interface
http://www.fortnet.org/HCI/
Gorilla interfacees unwelcome.

Maykorners Web Design Page
http://homepage.interaccess.com/~alemaj/superal.htm
Lots of tips, even if you don't hire.

Net Dreamz
http://www.netdreamz.com/dreamz/design.html
Excellent work, though the price is aimed a little beyond most people's pockets.

Spiderwoman Web Design
http://www.primenet.com/~pax/
Solid design, moderate prices.

The Book
http://www.thebook.com/
Terrific, extraordinarily cheap page creation.

Webgal
http://www.webgal.com/
A woman-owned design company.

World Wide exPress
http://www.wwe.com/WWE/
"Millions for pennies, instantly."

Getting Linked: Network with the World

Barbara Bergesen

Why settle for a mere 15 minutes of fame when you can list your personal Web page on a variety of search engines? It's a lot easier than you think, costs hours rather than dollars, and, if your URL is legit, need yield only a minimal fear of rejection. The goal of Internet directory creators is to come as close as possible to indexing everything on the Web. If you've created a site, it's to their advantage to list it.

Publicizing Your Web site

Search engine directories typically have an add/delete section that gives you an opportunity to submit the URL for your home page. It's also the place where you may delete your URL if you like, or notify the directory that an URL it contains is no longer in existence.

The forms for submitting URLs are all straightforward, although they vary in length. Some forms, such as the one for WWW Worm (**http://wwww.cs.colorado.edu/wwww**), are short and concise. Others, like the one for Yahoo! (**http://www.yahoo.com/**), will require a bit more of your time. Yahoo!'s form requires a brief description of the site, and asks you to take the time to categorize it properly, among other requests.

Expect to wait from a few days to two weeks while the search engine's software makes sure the URL is legitimate and checks all links. WebCrawler (**http://www.webcrawler.com/**) even has a Submission Status link, which lets you find out what's going on with your request. If your request has not yielded a directory listing, make sure that your page is accessible, and that your server is up.

AAA
Internet Promotions
Let us promote your web site
Title of your site:
URL:
http //
ALTA VISTA
Help
Query
Surprise
Submit New URLs Σ Delete URLs Σ Change URLs Σ Exclude Pages from the Index
Submit New URLs
Alta Vista searches and indexes the entire Web continuously. If your site is new, or as yet unconnected to many other sites on the Web, then you can submit the main URL
http //
Submit New URL

For $159.99, AAA Internet Promotions (http://www.west.net/~solution/) will get you listed on 100 "top" directories. For free, Submit It! will help you get listed on search engines (http:// www.submit-it.com). One particular search engine you'll want to get listed on is Alta Vista (http://www.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/query?pg=addurl).

Options for Getting Listed

A good place to get started is A1's Directory (**http://www.vir.com/~wyatt/index.html**). It's collected, in a searchable index, 520 free sites on which to promote your Web page. You can search on sites by category (e.g., General Interest, Hot Site/Cool Site, Computers & Computer Industry), and get linked directly to the indices' "submit" forms.

Something else you'll want to check out is a free service call Submit-It! (**http://www.submit-it.com/**). You send in your URL using a pre-existing form. The URL is then sent to several directories, including such big-name search engines as the Whole Internet Catalog (**http://www-e1c.gnn.com/ gnn/wic/index.html**) and Yahoo!, as well as less commercial directories, such as the University of Colorado's Harvest (**http://harvest.cs.colorado. edu/**). If you don't want to go through the trouble of contacting net directories yourself, and you have some spare cash floating around, AAA Internet Promotions (**http://www.west.net/~solution/**) will take your URL and fill out forms to get you listed on a certain selection of directories, depending on how much you're willing to pay. Directory Listing Service (**http://www.wwbcity.com/dirlist.htm**) will also submit your URL to a number of different sites, again for a fee. And how do you stay listed once you get on? Maintain your site and keep all links up-to-date. ■

How To Get Found

Here's a starting list of some Web site search engines and directories you may wish to contact to make sure the masses on the net find your site. Get a more complete list of search engines at http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/World_Wide_Web/Searching_the_Web/.

All-in-One Search Page
http://www.albany.net/allinone/

AltaVista
http://www.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/query?pg=addurl

excite Netsearch
http://www.excite.com/

eZ Find
http://www.theriver.com/TheRiver/Explore/ezfind.html

Find It!
http://www.cam.org/~psarena/find-it.html

InfoSeek
http://www2.infoseek.com

Inktomi
http://inktomi.berkeley.edu/query.html

Lycos
http://www.lycos.com/register.html

Open Text
http://www.opentext.com/omw/f-omw-submit.html

WebCrawler
http://webcrawler.com/WebCrawler/SubmitURLS.html

Whole Internet Catalog
http://gnn-e2a.gnn.com/gnn/wic/wics/support/comments.html

WWWWorm
http://wwwmcb.cs.colorado.edu/home/mcbryan/wwwwadd.html

Yahoo!
http://www.yahoo.com/text/bin/add

Don't Let Your **Web Page** Make You a **Criminal**

Wayne Cunningham

Let's say you really like the band GWAR, and you want to show the world, via the Web, how *much* you like it. You scan in the covers from your CDs and some concert pictures from a magazine, then copy onto your computer some 30-second audio clips and one full song. Then you tie it all together in several beautifully formatted Web pages, and put them all online.

The next day, you hear a knock on your door. A seedy-looking little person hands you a subpoena. How could this happen to you? You've seen plenty of other Web sites using graphics and sounds from bands.

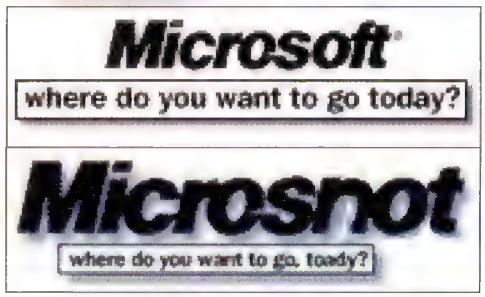
Everybody's Doing It, Right?

The most obvious subject matter for your personal Web page is a list of the things that you like — bands, TV shows, movies, and so on. But there's a danger that the graphics and sound files required of any good fan page are owned by someone else, which means that reproducing them is illegal — unless the owner of the copyright has given permission.

The reason why there is so much blatant copyright violation on the Web is that copyright owners usually aren't aware that people have illegally posted their material. But now that record companies and TV and movie studios are getting onto the Web, they're likely to begin to take more notice of fan sites with copyright violations, and to start calling in the lawyers. Copyright violators face having their hard drives and all other copies of the infringing material impounded and possibly destroyed. In addition, they're likely to be handed fines of between $500 to $20,000.

UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT OFFICE
The Library *of* Congress

Before you scan in the cover of your GWAR CD, be sure to check out copyright laws at http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/.



Using a logo, like Microsoft's, is okay if your site is a parody, like this Microsnot site (http://www.microsnot.com/). We think it would be better to say "where do you want to *blow* today?," but then, we're not the copycats.

Steps to Keep You **Legal**

Just about anything can be copyrighted, as long as it can be "fixed in a tangible medium of expression," which is legalese for recording, printing, photographing, or other physical forms. One aspect of the Web about which the law remains unclear: The mere act of browsing a Web page causes that page to be copied onto your computer, which means you're illegally copying text and graphics. This is why music companies that put up an artist site, and include downloadable song or video clips ,generally give a very limited license for people to play these on their computers.

Before you despair at ever being able to put up that nasty GWAR site, be aware that there are a few ways you can use copyrighted material without breaking the law. The most secure way to publish logos and song lyrics on your site is to get permission from the owners of the copyright. If you intend to have your site funded by advertising, there isn't much point in even asking, unless you plan to give the owner some payment in return. If you have a small fan site you fund entirely out of your own pocket, you're much more likely to get copyright permission. Another way to use copyrighted material and avoid getting busted is to make sure your publishing attempt falls under the provision of "fair use." This provision says you can use copyrighted material "for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research." Fair use means that you don't use substantial portions of the copyrighted material, just enough to make a point. Finally, parody is generally considered to be protected. While it would be illegal to copy the Microsoft logo (**http://www.microsoft. com/**) and put it on your Web page, it's O.K. to take the logo and alter it so it says Microsnot (**http://www. microsnot.com/**) and publish a parody of Microsoft. The entire copyright act can be found online at **http://www.law.cornell.edu/usc/17/overview.html**. Another good resource is the Copyright Website (**http://www.benedict.com/**). ■

COPYRIGHT GUIDELINES

- Books are copyrightable: Publishing stories or articles on a Web page could be infringement.
- Titles and tables of content are generally not considered to be protected by copyright, depending on use: For example, there is no harm in publishing a list of your favorite books, but you can't call your site "The Shining."
- Song clips by persons other than yourself are copyrighted: They should not be copied onto your hard drive, much less made available via your Web site.
- Graphic images, whether photographs or renderings, are protected by copyright law: Don't do it.

NOTE: GWAR logo courtesy of **http://neckar-alb.de/gwar/Gwar.html**

How the Pros Do It:

Profile of a Web Master

Lynda Weinman

Exceptional design is not easily found on the Web. The online visual arts magazine @tlas (**http://www.well.com/user/macrone/atlas/index.html**) is a breathtaking exception. The site houses the work of illustrators, designers, photographers, and journalists. Each page is also a running advertisement for superior Web design. Every link that one clicks on is stunning, and the attention to detail makes most other Web sites look utterly lackluster by comparison.

I tracked down one of the three partners who created @tlas, Michael Macrone, and picked his brain to scavenge useful design tips for readers of *The Net*. Macrone, like the other two partners in @tlas, Amy Franceschini and Olivier Laude, works on the @tlas site in his spare time, without pay. Franceschini creates the screen graphics and navigational icons, and Laude selects the visual and editorial content of the site. Macrone is the Web master/site designer who puts the results of Franceschini and Laude's ideas and images onto their Web pages.

Macrone wrote all the HTML on the opening screen of the @tlas site (http://www.well.com/user/macrone/atlas/index.html). Note that everything is aligned using tables. The navigational art was designed by Amy Franceschini, and is a large image map file. The amber lines are a repeated custom-generated JPEG file; the background and link colors are defined by hexadecimal body tags.

Getting **Started**

When the first beta of the Mosaic Web browser was released almost two years ago, Macrone was a subscriber to San Francisco's renowned online source, the WELL (**http://www.well.com/**). At that time, WELL discussion groups were on fire with excitement over the potential of the World Wide Web. In response, and as a free service to its subscribers, the WELL offered Web space to anyone interested in using it. Macrone immediately went to work creating his first site.

Macrone taught himself HTML by browsing the Web and viewing the source codes of Web pages he liked. In the beginning, he spent a lot of time on the home page of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (**http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/NCSAHome.html**), studying Web page design tips and learning about HTML tags. It was easy to learn everything there was to know about HTML in those days, since there were relatively few tags in existence. When Netscape was released, the light bulbs went off. Macrone instantly recognized the significance of Netscape-initiated alignment and table tags.

Macrone recalls: "Tables were the answer to my alignment frustrations — they offer a grid paradigm that's much like what visual designers use on a printed page Without grids, magazine design as we know it today would be impossible. Without grids, decent Web design was nearly impossible as

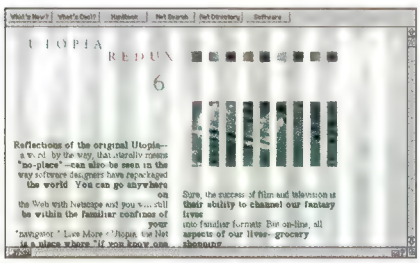
Each department of @tlas — Multimedia, Illustration, Design, and Photography — has its own image map, and consistent alignment created by tables.

Macrone has a set of Web pages that publicize his books. The type of alignment you see here is extremely tricky — it involves detailed table and alignment tags.

well." Given Macrone's love for tables, it's not surprising that tables are used on every page of @tlas. They make it possible for Macrone to align elements perfectly from one link to another, and they're one of the reasons for @tlas' design continuity. They're also a fundamental reason for the site's visual success.

The **Creation** Process

Macrone is aware that Netscape is the only browser to fully support tables. "We made the decision that anybody who is bothering to look at @tlas probably already has Netscape. We used to put a disclaimer on the first page [about viewers needing to use Netscape]; it linked our viewers to the Netscape site so they could download the browser, but we stopped. We're not in the business of selling browser software for Netscape." Faced with the decision to design for Netscape or make two separate sets of pages — one for Netscape, and another set for browsers that don't support alignment and table tags — Macrone decided to go the solo Netscape path. "Anyone who is interested in aesthetics on the Web will have Netscape. I hate to exclude those coming on to the Web through America Online, for example, but it's the choice you make. If you want to design something that looks really nice, you'll have to write off some percentage of the audience."



Utopia Redux, as seen at http://www.word.com/jacobs/index.html, is composed of pages designed by Macrone. Here's an example of the finished screen.

Macrone works on a Power Macintosh 7500 with 16MB RAM, and RamDoubler, a software utility that tricks your system into thinking it has more RAM. His primary software applications are Photoshop, Netscape, and BBEdit (the shareware version of BBEdit is available from Bare Bones Software at **http://www. tiac.net/biz/bbsw/).**

Web **Authoring** Methodology

There are no standard rules of thumb in Macrone's Web authoring methodology. He typically takes Franceschini's images through many iterations before he decides which best suits the page it's intended for. Here's how he works:

1. Macrone takes an image and saves it as a GIF. He starts at four-bit (16 colors), goes up to five-bit (32 colors), and continues all the way to eight-bit (256 colors) in order to find the right balance of image quality and file size.

2. He also makes several JPEGs of the image, in Max, High, Med, and Low quality.

3. Macrone inserts all these different versions of files into his HTML BBEdit document, and views them in Netscape.

According to Macrone, "This [process] allows me to try all the options, and confidently choose the best-quality image with the smallest possible file size."

Macrone is not a huge fan of background tile patterns (which he feels can easily clutter a page) or transparent images (which often load improperly and impose dithering, since the images then have to be eight-bit). He usually chooses solid-colored backgrounds (and seems to favor black and white as his predominant choices), and uses hexadecimal code to generate the background colors of pages, text, and links. He uses an FKey shareware program, called "GetColor FKey" (available from **http://hyperarchive.lcs.mit.edu/HyperArchive/Archive/gst/grf/get-color-121-fkey.hqx**), which converts the eyedropper selection in Photoshop to its RGB values and stores them on the clipboard. He then uses HTML Color Picker (available from **http://hyperarchive.lcs.mit.edu/HyperArchive/Archive/text/html/html-color-picker-203.hqx**) to convert the RGB to hexadecimal code and places the resulting hex into his BBEdit HTML document.

Macrone swears by BBEdit's search and replace features, which can batch-process an unlimited number of HTML documents within a folder. His work with table and alignment tags makes it possible for him to create consistent graphic navigation bar placement on each page. Each page contains its own navigation graphic, which has an associated image map.

Hot links

Bare Bones Software
(publisher of BBEdit)
http://www.tiac.net/biz/bbsw/

GetColor FKEY
(universal eyedropper tool)
ftp://mirror.apple.com/mirrors/Info-Mac.Archive/gst/grf/

http://hyperarchive.lcs.mit.edu/HyperArchive/Archive/gst/grf/get-color-121-fkey.hqx

HTML ColorPicker
(selects/converts RGB to HEX)
ftp://mirror.apple.com/mirrors/Info-Mac.Archive/text/html/

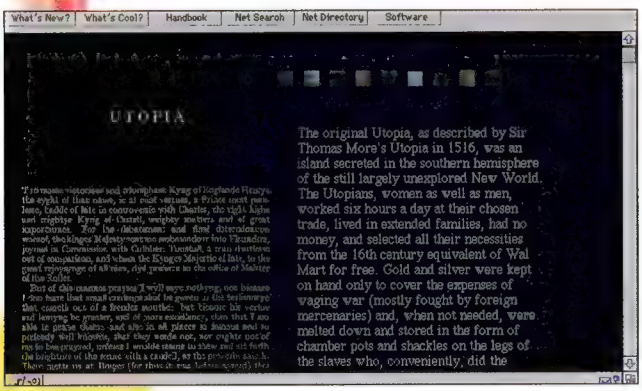
http://hyperarchive.lcs.mit.edu/HyperArchive/Archive/text/html/html-color-picker-203.hqx

Michael Macrone's @atlas Web site
http://www.well.com/user/macrone/atlas/index.html

The WELL
http://www.well.com/

Utopia Redux
http://www.word.com/jacobs/

over story • profile • cover story • profile • cover story • profile • co


What's New?
What's Cool?
Handbook
Net Search
Net Directory
Software
UTOPIA
The original Utopia, as described by Sir Thomas More's Utopia in 1516, was an island secreted in the southern hemisphere of the still largely unexplored New World. The Utopians, women as well as men, worked six hours a day at their chosen trade, lived in extended families, had no money, and selected all their necessities from the 16th century equivalent of Wal Mart for free. Gold and silver were kept on hand only to cover the expenses of waging war (mostly fought by foreign mercenaries) and, when not needed, were melted down and stored in the form of chamber pots and shackles on the legs of the slaves who, conveniently, did the

Another of the Eutopia Redux screens. The unreadable element of text on the left is part of a background tile, and the HTML text on the right is aligned using table tags.

Staying Up to Date

How does Macrone keep current? He subscribes to the following Usenet groups and mailing lists:

Usenet:

- **comp.sys.mac.com**
- **comp.infosystems.www.authoring.html**

Mailing Lists:

- ADV-HTML **listserv@ualvm.ua.edu**
- Apple-Internet-Authoring **listproc@solutions.apple.com**
- HTML Writer's Guild **majordomo@rpmdp.com**

Paying **Attention** to **Detail**

There are more than 150 image maps on the @tlas site. They pose a staggering file management challenge. Michael uses WebMap (available at **http://www.city.net/cux/software/webmap.html**) to generate the image map definition files.

By using BBEdit, Michael can easily make changes over multiple files, which becomes critical when one deals with a high volume of pages and image maps, such as are contained within the @tlas site. He is also very precise and careful with his naming conventions. If an artist has 10 pages devoted to his or her section, the map file will be called by the artist's name, page number, and file type. This makes it very easy to work on large volumes of documents and keep track of everything.

Macrone takes pride in the attention to detail he pays to each page and design challenge. He recently created a series of pages for an article called "Utopia Redux" on the word.com site (**http://word.com/jacobs/**).

He spent hours changing the pixel dimensions of a GIF file on one page so that it would perfectly align to the vertical stripes of its page's background pattern. This level of dedication is evident in all of his work.

Macrone is an advocate of viewing the source code of anything and everything that appeals to him. "I pay special attention to my own HTML code readability," Michael states.

"If I were to die tomorrow, someone could pick up and carry on with @tlas pretty easily by studying my source code. I make sure it's neat, and use lots of comment tags and underscored lines for separating text. I don't want to be the only one doing this job forever, so I'd rather not make myself indispensable and trap myself." ■

A Jack of All Trades: **Michael Macrone**

Macrone writes books for a living on subjects as far away from Web authoring as imaginable. His book titles, which range from *Eureka!: What Archimedes Really Meant and 80 Other Key Ideas Explained* (HarperCollins 1994) to *Brush Up Your Shakespeare!* (Harper and Row 1990) are all displayed on his personal site (**http://www.well.com/user/macrone/**). He even links his *It's Greek to Me!* (HarperCollins 1991) to Barnes & Noble online (**http://www.shopping2000.com/shopping2000/barnes/bvzr.html**) for impulse buyers who happen to be surfing his Web site and want to purchase it. He and the other two @tlas partners would love to get paid for their work on the Web, since they spend all their time creating @tlas and other sites. For the moment, they have put their effort into Web site design, rather than into recruiting sponsors and/or business managers for the @tlas site. All three @tlas partners — Michael Macrone (**macrone@well.com**), Amy Franceschini (**posttool@sirius.com**), and Olivier Laude (**olivier@sirius.com**) — are available to design sites for other clients. It's doubtful any of them will be out of a job for a long time to come.

PHOTO: CATHERINE KARNOW

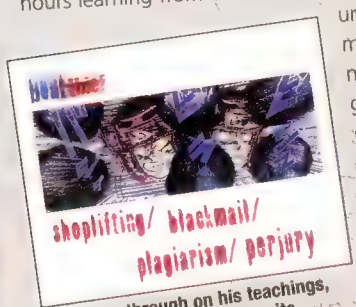
Confessions of a Web Shao-lin Master

by Wayne Bremser

I reached the temple of Shao-lin (**http://gate.cruzio.com/~earthwks/ earthwks/shaolin/shaolin 1.html**), ready to transform my America Online-softened soul into an all-powerful Web killing machine. The Buddhist masters sat me down and said to me: "You come as a blind warrior. You do not yet know the skills of the masters. The blind way requires that you know nothing except your soul, and dive, willing and eager, into learning." There were 36 chambers of knowledge to gather at Shao-lin. The masters would tell me: "There are many Web warriors who know Unix like you know the back of your hand. What do you have to conquer these skilled killers?... Your eager and curious nature and your soul." Before I reached the battlefield, there were plenty of training sessions that brought me the knowledge of the 36 chambers.

Your Server is Your Weapon

My teacher told me about the importance of finding the right metal with which to construct my sword — I needed to find a decent ISP, Internet Service Provider (**http://www.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Companies/Internet_Service_Providers/Internet_Access_Providers/Indices/**). Because the warrior must spend hundreds of hours learning from the masters, I searched for an ISP with unlimited time each month. And because I needed space to grow, I got an ISP with 25 megs of storage space (**http://www.best. com/**). Each ISP has a different personality.



Following through on his teachings, the author created his own site.

Mine had a FAQ, and I spent quality time with it. Here, I found knowledge of image maps, file privileges, CGI scripts, and other server-specific goodies.

Embrace the Shell

Once I found the ISP, I visited NCSA Telnet (**http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/ Software/MacTelnet/**). My master taught me: "Learn how to do a few things on Telnet, and you will never fail." Telnet lets me check e-mail and move files from any computer, anywhere in the world. File structures are like beautiful thin paper houses: Inside the shell, I feel their strengths and weaknesses.

Quality of the Kill

My master was used to having students ask her questions about killing opponents. She would slap them and bark: "Young warriors get laughed at when they kill opponents with coarse style."

I knew that when I finally put my site up on the Web (**http://www.beatthief.com/**), it would be shunned and scorned if the design was not well-developed. So, whenever I found a site or a designer whose work I liked (**http://www.razorfish.com/**, **http://web.syr.edu/~jbarnold/split.html**, **http://www.favela.org/**), I would try to copy the style.

Later, though, I learned to think about what aspect of the content had inspired the site's designer to choose certain colors, fonts, and images. When I was new to Web design, I tried elaborate things. I learned that I could use a JPEG as a tiled background (**http://the-tech.mit.edu/KPT/bgs.html**). I used some of those "funky," swirly, neo-fractal-delic graphics on my site.

But after I had designed the whole site in this manner, I stepped back and realized it was very stupid looking. I comprehended that less was more. These days, I think very carefully about using background or "wacky" filters on my images. Great people of the battlefield are not premature in using new skills.

Your Soul is Divided in 36 Chambers

The 36 chambers, the higher levels of martial arts knowledge, measure the level at which the student is in unison with the world inside her and outside of her. When I develop quality content for the Web, I synchronize how I feel expressing it through the medium of HTML, and what people's expectations are of that content.

Dorm room "fanzines" (**http://www.nando.net/BeastieBoys/**, **http://www.fatgirl.com/**) are eviscerating Hollywood new-edutain-media-rich Web sites (**http://www. rocktropolis.com**, **http://www.mca.com/**, **http:// www.mtv.com/**) because the "entertainment" companies don't understand the content they're pushing. This problem overshadows their other problem: an ignorance of the HTML medium.

When I put content on my Web site, I study it and know it like my sword. I am proud of it; it is part of me. When choosing content, I always remember that the battles the great poets write about are fought for glory, never for money. ■

The Net's Lexicon

4-bit image
A graphic that has 16 colors.

5-bit image
A graphic that has 32 colors.

8-bit image
A color image that has 256 colors or less.

browser An application that enables you to access World Wide Web pages. Most browsers provide the capability to view Web pages, copy and print material from Web pages, download files over the Web, and navigate throughout the Web.

color swatch
A color sample, often used by artists to pick from a color palette.

default color
The color automatically inserted by a software application. Default colors are often a starting point only, and can be changed by the user.

dithering The positioning of different-colored pixels within an image that uses a 256-color palette to simulate a color that doesn't exist in the palette. A dithered image often looks like it's composed of scattered pixels.

FTP File Transfer Protocol. An Internet protocol that lets users remotely access files on other computers. FTP files can be downloaded onto your computer.

GIF Graphic Interchange Format. A bit-mapped color graphics file format. GIFs are one of the graphics file format most commonly used on the Web because they employ an efficient compression method.

GIF89a A superset of the original GIF file format that can include transparency information, which makes it possible to layer an irregularly shaped graphic over a background on a Web page.

Gopher A browsing and searching system that lets you find and retrieve text and files.

hexadecimal
A coding scheme that is required for the insertion of color information into Web pages.

HTML Hypertext Markup Language. The common programming language for interchange of hypertext between the World Wide Web client (browser) and server. Web pages must be written using HTML.

hypertext Text formatted with links that let the reader jump around related topics on separate pages.

Java An object-oriented programming language that will add interactive objects to Web sites.

JPEG Joint Photographic Experts Group. A compression technique that can reduce the size of a graphic file by as much as 96 percent.

link A word or phrase emphasized in a hypertext document that acts as a pointer to more information on that specific subject. Links are generally underlined and may appear in a different color. When you click on a link, you can be transported to a different Web page that contains information pertaining to the link word or phrase.

monospace font Each letter in a monospace typeface takes up the same amount of physical space.

pattern source file
When making background image tiles on Web pages, a pattern source file is needed to determine what the tiled pattern will look like and how many times it will repeat.

PDF Portable Document Format. A standard used by Adobe Acrobat to display a document in a consistent format on any computer. Adobe Acrobat Reader is available at **http://www.adobe.com/**.

pixel The unit of measurement by which Web graphics are defined.

RGB The Red, Green, and Blue color palette.

seamless tile
Refers to background patterns on the Web that don't show any visible edges when the tile repeats.

source tile The image that will be repeated as a tile in the background of a Web page.

transparent image/GIF
Also known as GIF89. A superset of the original GIF format. It allows an image to have areas that are assigned to disappear and show through to another background image to create the illusion that the image is floating..

TIFF Tag Image File Format. A standard file format used for scanning, storing, and interchanging color and gray scale graphic images.

URL Uniform Resource Locator. Describes the location and access method of a resource on the Internet. All public Web sites have URLs.

VRML Virtual Reality Markup Language. An emerging standard that will let you model and move around in 3D environments on the Internet. ■

Lynda Weinman

net FAQ

Todd Marshall

Got a question on about getting or staying online?

We've got answers. Send your questions via e-mail to faq@thenet-usa.com, or by snail mail to 150 North Hill Drive, Suite 40, Brisbane, CA 94005

Upgrading a 286 PC for the Net

Q I am saddled with a 286 PC. Is it possible for me to upgrade my 286 so I can use it on the Internet and the online services? If so, exactly what upgrades do I need to make? I want to use a V.34 modem and eventually increase my hard drive to 1.2 GB.

A Although most of the tools you'll find for the Internet (Web browsers, e-mail packages, etc.) will state on the packaging box that they need at least a 386 processor to work, often that's not true. They say 386 is needed because that's what the code is optimized for. Chances are the tools will work on your 286, but it's going to be slow, more so, perhaps, than what you're used to. The only real component that you're going to have to upgrade (aside from getting a modem) is memory. The more memory you have, the better.

Web pages increasingly have added plug-ins and helper applications, and can demand some serious memory requirements. You'll need at least 8MB, and hopefully, your machine has enough slots to accept that much. Also, when you're buying new memory chips, tell the salesperson that you're planning to get a new machine somewhere down the line, and you'll want to use your memory chips in that machine as well. That way, the salesperson won't end up giving you an older chip that's optimized for a 286 or 386 but not a Pentium. Make sure the salesperson agrees, but most state-of-art memory chips you run across will work on your 286 just fine. They'll also work beautifully should you decide to upgrade to a Pentium. As far as other components to upgrade, like your hard drive, you must be the judge of that. With your processor, a bigger and faster hard drive isn't really going to make that much of a difference.

How To Use America Online as a Guest User

Q I'm a new user to the Internet and have just signed on here in Panama. I want to access America Online as a guest user, but really don't know how. I got the software and believe the server will allow the access. Can you help?

A The way that America Online software works, you must have a regular account when you first configure the software. The software requires a base account off of which to run, so that it can configure

local numbers, its default account settings, and so on. If you don't already have AOL software, just call America Online at 800 827 6364, and get the software and a free 10-hour test run. Then, you may use that account as the base account for the set-up procedure. Once you get everything configured, you never have to use that account again. From then on, when you're at the initial sign-on screen, click on the pull-down menu and you'll see an option for guest sign-in. You can sign on as a guest from then on. Also, remember, if you're running off the server, make sure to click the TCP/IP option instead of the regular modem dial-up method. You'll see that when you're first setting up.

Error-Free Eudora Use on a PC

Q I have been using Prodigy for over a year and just this past week decided to try out the net with a local Internet service. My problem is with the freeware version of Eudora. When I try to use it, I get error messages that say it cannot find the CIDRMT.DLL, CIDPPP.DLL, and Winsock.dll. I have no idea what it's talking about. I know the Winsock is there because my Web browser works just fine. Do you have any idea what it wants?

A Congratulations! You've just stumbled upon one of those strange Windows quirks that Microsoft still hasn't fixed. Anything with a .dll extension means it's a Dynamic Link Library file. Each .dll file holds little pieces of information that act as links between the program and the Windows system software. Simple enough. The quirk is that whenever you move an application and its components (including the .dll files) anywhere else on your hard drive, the application still looks for the .dll files in their original location. When it can't find them, you get the error message that you've received. There are two simple fixes to the problem. You can either find the .dll files, copy them, and put them in the original location where Eudora is looking for them, or you can reinstall Eudora, and it will find the .dll files in their current location.

Using a BBS to Access the Internet

Q I am online with a BBS that only has access to the Internet via e-mail. I have been told that I can still access any FTP site I wish. My question is, how?

A If it's a true BBS (Bulletin Board System), you can probably only access FTP sites through tools found in the BBS software. As opposed to a regular Internet provider, a BBS usually only gives you access to its system. You dial up its server, and usually you're stuck within its confines. Some BBSs have been rigged up to act as limited gateways to the Internet, but you probably don't want to use one of these as your main Internet provider. Even when you send e-mail on such BBSs, chances are you're sending the mail through the software the BBS provides, which means the e-mail probably runs through a script, then is sent off to the Internet through a software tool to which you don't have access. If your BBS provider has stated that you have unlimited FTP access, it's probably giving you that access through a similar system that the BBS provider has set up. Whereas you can use any FTP software you want when you're using an Internet provider, you'll be stuck using the BBS' specific tools if you go through a BBS. The next time you're on the BBS, drop the SYSOP (system operator) a line and see if the BBS does indeed offer FTP access, and find out what tools it provides. ■

Bizarre Site O' The Month

http://www.ice.net/~crunch/

Crunchy Stuff

Care For An Insulin Chaser With That Cereal, Friend?

Jon Phillips

Within the colorful nomenclature of sugar-fortified breakfast cereals, perhaps Quaker's Vanilly Crunch stands paramount as the most extreme example of ill-conceived weirdness.

Dig the cover illustration. Here we have Wilma, a trashy looking albino whale, making aggressive googly eyes at a row boat-bound Cap'n Crunch. Strangely enough, the good captain doesn't appear frightened. You might question his nonchalance — *he is about to be violated by a love-sick whale*. He appears to be a full nautical mile from his anchored clipper ship, yet actually flirts back, his gaze bemused, as if to say, "Who cares about my anchored clipper ship. What's the story with this delightfully fat sea mammal who's so easy on the eyes?"

Strange indeed. The Cap'n always seemed so loyal to his crew. But let's consider the cereal itself. Vanilly Crunch was one of many aberrations to sully the otherwise upstanding Crunch family name. We're talking ultra-sweet, vanilla-flavored crunch particles sans crunchberries. *Sans crunchberries* — the charismatic Cosmo Kramers of the breakfast cereal set.

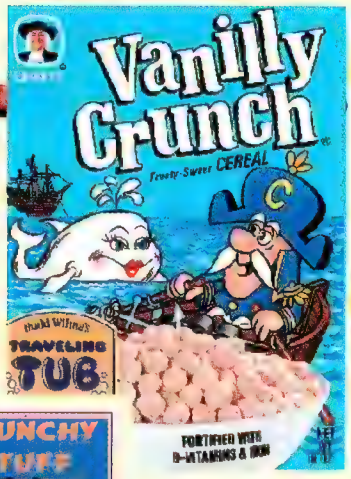
The dread Vanilly Crunch escaped from the Quaker research and development labs in 1975, and while it was quickly pooh-poohed by a discerning public, its spirit thrives on Crunchy Stuff, a Web site devoted to a seemingly singular purpose: the display of multi-colored cereal boxes.

Whether you're a child of the 90s, a Gen-X pothead, or a mature adult pining for those tooth-decayed years of yore, this collection of vintage cereal boxes will leave you yearning for your favorite sugar-drenched confetti. (How old were you when you last ate a bowl of cereal with orange juice or root beer because you didn't have any milk in the house? That's right, friend, it *still* doesn't work.)

Crunchy Stuff is the brainchild of Jim Wilson, 31, a Bloomington, Illinois resident who has collected more than 180 cereal boxes, some of which are still sealed, their kitschy toy surprises entombed for eternity. In neatly arranged rows, Wilson's site presents thumbnail images of 53 boxes. A 1978 carton of Boo-Berry dates itself perfectly with the promise of a *Star Wars* trading card hidden somewhere within its frosty blue goodness.

And who can forget the Freakies bunch, those lovably amorphous breakfast cereal spokesmonsters who were such hits with the kiddies, they were awarded their own Saturday morning cartoon show? Perhaps you still have a rubber Freakies figurine stuck to the dashboard of your '73 Camaro.

Crunchy Stuff offers a historical perspective of kiddie cereals, from the Cold War 50s to the disco 70s.



Jim Wilson is one sugar-happy dude. His crowning moment: "Getting two Daffy Dogs in one box of Applejacks. That's the kind of stuff little kids dream of." His favorite toy surprise of all time: "Banana Splits Hand Puppets!"

The beauty of Wilson's site perhaps lies in its simplicity. Here you'll find cereal box upon cereal box upon cereal box — and very little else. When you click on one of the thumbnails, you jump to a detailed, high-res image of the product in question.

Off to the side is the cereal's proper brand name, the name of its toy surprise, and the year in which the cereal hit market. The effect is akin to a museum display. Reaching back to 1954 with a primordial box of Kellogg's Sugar Corn Pops ("a rootin'-tootin' snack shot with sugar!," claims a pre-health and fitness age testimonial), Wilson lets his content succeed or fail by the strength of its own merits.

"I really love excess," says Wilson. "Cereal boxes, Hot Wheels cars, buttons, records, soda bottles, whatever. If you put one-hundred different ones in a row, it will look cool."

Wilson says his site is primed to expand. However, he wouldn't say which archived cereal boxes will be included in the update. But between Choco-Crunch, Christmas Crunch, Cinnamon Crunch, Crunch Berries, Deep Sea Crunch, Peanut Butter Crunch, Punch Crunch, and — whew, are we there yet? — Triple Crunch, Wilson should have plenty of crunchy goodness with which to bedazzle the diabetic masses. ■

RANT

Contemplating April Fools

A Month of Showers, A Month of Bad Jokes

Crystal Waters

A few days ago, when I got to work, I found out that *The Net* had been kicked out of a store for having the word SEX on its cover (that was our February issue). And yes, even a few readers e-mailed to complain. O.K., so it's nothing to do with mainstream America, nor is it something that at least

35 million adults may be able to read — but how shocking can the word SEX be? If stores have a rule about not stocking any magazine that has the word SEX on the cover, well, rules are rules.

But I'll bet you a pretty penny that the infamous *Cosmopolitan* magazine is still sitting on their shelves, and if it's *their* February issue, I'll also bet that SEX is explicitly used as a cover line. Don't damn us, stores and readers, for trying to give comprehensive information about safe sex and AIDS

resources, and perhaps saving a teenager from some pervert stalker. I mean, part of me thinks it amusing that our cover is found shocking (especially since I know the two people on the front, and if people actually read the feature, they'd see that it's not a sexually explicit porno rag by a long shot). But, on the same day I heard this news about our issue, I also found out that a friend had died of AIDS. If our article gives one person the impetus to take an HIV test, and prevents just one person from contracting or spreading the virus, it's worth any complaints and controversy. Nuff said.

So, speaking of April Fools, I found a wealth of used April Fools jokes on the net, gratefully sponsored by none other than SunSITE (those Java people), at http://sunsite.unc.edu/dbarberi/april-fools.html. If sending humorous e-mails to all of your friends is an addiction for you like it is for me, here you'll find treasures, such as a mock letter from Steve Case, president of America Online, that includes such gems as, "there has been some discussion that we are reading your mail. Let me assure you that we are working on it as fast as possible, and that the FBI will be done with its inspections soon so user activity may return to normal."

Those people you just talked into joining AOL will love this one, I'm certain.

How about "DEAR MISS MANNERS — Can you tell me what the established etiquette might be regarding peddling of narcotics?" I won't get into the rest of the details here.

April showers are a little bit harder to follow up on. I couldn't find any proof that this month's precipitation precipitates the following month's flora. My searches mostly found FTP sites like ftp://explorer.arc.nasa.gov/pub/SPACE/SHUTTLE/ss04.01.93, which contains daunting to-do listings such as, "Continue leak checks for additional data points on check valves on main engine number 1." This is no fun at all, although this memo *is* dated April 1, so who knows what those NASA engineers were up to.

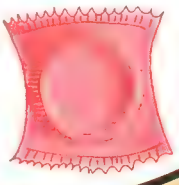
And while we're at it, let's not forget this month's ultimate bad joke: TAX TIME. Luckily, the sparse Tax Humor site (http://www.5010geary.com/humor.htm) is still up and running at press time, and brings us such insights as " 'Tis much better to give than receive — and it's deductible."

There are only about five more jokes on the page, so maybe you can send its keeper whatever money you have left over after paying taxes so he can hire someone to come up with more jokes. I think this is deductible, too. ■

Not A Joke

As of December 15, 1995, 1,291,810 cumulative AIDS cases in adults and children had been reported to the World Health Organization Global Programme on AIDS from 193 countries. This represents a 26 percent increase from the 1,025,073 cases reported in the January 3, 1995 update (and in the Weekly Epidemiological Record of January 13, 1995).

WHO also estimates that there were 13-15 million HIV-infected adults alive as of late 1994 (from the World Health Organization site, **http://gpawww.who.ch/aidscase/dec1995/current.htm**). In December 1995, it was predicted by Ibrahim Samba of the World Health Organization that the number of AIDS cases worldwide could double to 40 million by the end of the century.



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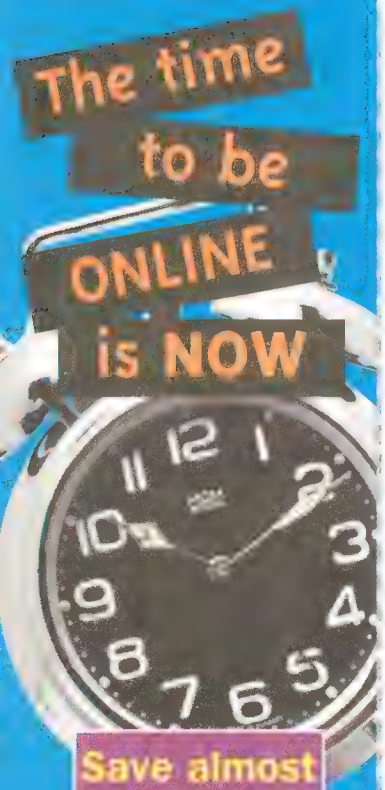

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blue pages

The Net's Directory

April 1996

The Big BANG! The Web is exploding in size and content at exponential rates, leaving surfers with a dizzying, dazzling array of new sites to see each and every month. So it's easy to get lost or sidetracked wandering amid the bounty. Follow a link here, click on a link there, and pretty soon, you've forgotten what it was you were trying to find in the first place. And as fun as it is to traverse among the chaos of cyberspace, we know it can be a bit frustrating, too.

The Net's Blue Pages Directory of Web sites leads the way to the most exciting, interesting, and useful sites within our 24 categories. And make no mistake, we'll tell you where not to go, too!

This month, we've decided to inspire all the couch potatoes and Web-a-holics to get outside and sip some fresh spring air with an intensive focus on Internet outdoor resources.

So, log off and and hit the trails!

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SPECIAL:

Outdoor Resources on the Net 96

We look at three different criteria when we review a Web site. Check out our little icons to see how well each site measures up:

CONTENT

How much content is there, and of what quality? Is there enough to satisfy someone interested in this topic and seeking to learn more about it? Is the content good enough to keep you coming back?

Rich in content

Fair amount of content

Needs more content

AESTHETIC MERIT

How attractive is the site? Though prettiness can't usually stand on its own, the layout *is* important. Does it pull the viewer in? Does it excite your interest? Does it make you want to come back?

A visual 10!

Appealing, not great

A dog

TECHNOLOGICAL SMARTNESS

How well-constructed is the site? Are there effective navigational tools? To what extent does the site integrate Web technologies like animation, tables, colored backgrounds, custom horizontal rules, etc.? Does the site creatively work around HTML conventions?

Rocket science material

Not stupid

Needs a brain

The best sites we've found are named Sites of the Month. Look for the icon at the right to help identify these sites.

art

Asian Arts

http://www.webart.com/asianart/index.html

Before Monet and Picasso picked up paint brushes, art existed as a sacred form of expression. In the Asian Arts site, visitors learn how sculpture played a central religious role in Indian civilization. Much of the site pays tribute to ancient deities such as the Vajrayana statue, which represents the five cosmic elements dominating the world. After gazing at the imagery, peruse extensive articles on the Giant Thangkas of Tsurphu Monastery. *—BJB*

net rating: *overall:* ***A***

Dayglo's Animation

http://www.isisnet.com/dayglo/

Flying sharks and neon pirates steer this Dayglo ship. You at home can download MPEG movie treasures of Mayan temples, robotic ferns, swimming schools of brickfish, and the superhero antics of Fifty P Man. Dayglo also offers a booty of free animation software and demos, and more links to amusing and weird sites than you can shake an MPEG leg at. The site should help beginning animators get a jump on their own creations instead of walking the plank alone. This, matey, is one ship on which everyone should sail. *—BJB*

net rating: *overall:* ***B-***

Graphite and Phosphor

http://www2.msstate.edu/~mbs1/gallery/gp.html

This drawing by Michael Speck adorns the "Images from Europe" section.

Graphite and Phosphor surrounds itself with an aura of mystery and discovery. Packaged with beautiful images and thoughtful layouts, this site pays homage to its creator's architectural and design passion, wonderfully displaying past and current projects. While some pages require a bit of patience (the site is almost exclusively composed of heavy images), the material at the end of the modem pull is well worth the wait. *—KV*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

Internet Art Emporium

http://www.infinity.ca/icreate/

The Art Emporium may not be magnetically captivating — could anything sporting the name "emporium" be captivating? But it certainly has its art-added value. The site features works from esteemed and not-yet-esteemed artists

Techno-Impressionist Art

http://www.tlc-systems.com/techno/index.html

SITE OF THE MONTH net APRIL 1996

This site's title instantly made me think of a neon-radiant, fiberoptik-glow traversing cyberspace, illuminated by the brilliance of modern art, classical painting, and digital hipness. Perhaps what we have here is a movement of lofty ideals in search of a utopian something or other.

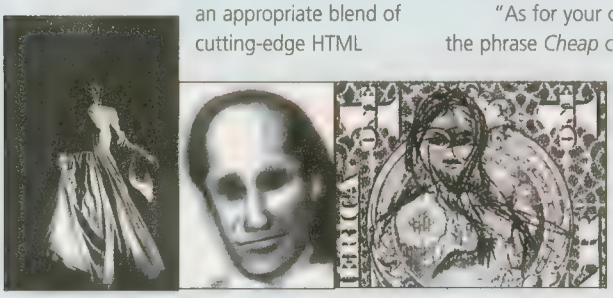
Riding a minimalist wave — far from the Impressionism of Monet, with which the masses may be more familiar — Techno-Impressionists break, make, and reinvent the rules. They are a group of conceptual artists who use computer-age tools and experimental routes to disseminate information and imagery. In the process, they've created something like their own movement.

The Web site echoes this concept with an appropriate blend of cutting-edge HTML tricks, and standard, easy-to-understand layouts. The creators make certain we're aware they are not "computer artists" but, instead, artists who use computer tools. Make no mistake: All the art was created specifically for the Web site.

The site includes all the requisite Web page devices. There are bells, whistles, everything — links, FAQ, history. And quite a bit of humor emerges after an initial glance. Many of the quotes in the "Quote" section are satirical, and the "Tidbits" area takes stabs at some tongue-in-cheek humor — sometimes successfully, sometimes a bit too tongue-in-cheek.

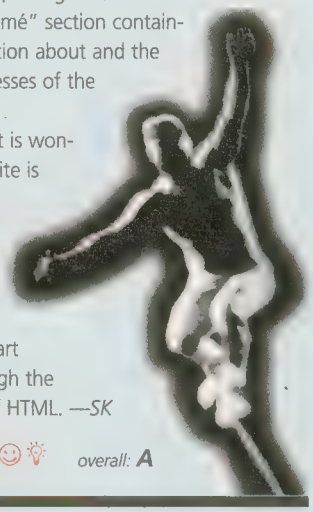
The overall tone is exemplified by the following message posted in the "Reviews" section by Jerry Reilly of the Museum of Bad Art (MOBA):

"As for your critics — *Bad*, *Cheesy*, and the phrase *Cheap computer tricks* are phrases that we at MOBA do not like to see bandied about carelessly. As a director of the leading institution in the nation dedicated to bad art, I can assure you that your work is none of the above and we resent the author's recklessness."



Incidentally, all reviews are written by the artists themselves — artists who go by such names as Vincent van Gui and Andrew Lloyd Webmaster.

More than 100 images span 25 galleries, and the site is updated at least a few times each week with still more images. There is minimal text, though there's a handy "resumé" section containing information about and the e-mail addresses of the artists.



The art is wonderful, the site is smooth and well-organized, and, overall, it's a fantastic look at the art world through the periscope of HTML. —*SK*

net rating: ☕☺💡 *overall:* **A**

worldwide, with hopes that Web surfers may want to spend some money. Pricing and ordering information is well-displayed; however, the site's proprietors have yet to initiate any support of online transactions (though you could place, not *pay* for, an order via e-mail). The Emporium also includes the ubiquitous link list of other art-related resources. It is indeed well-organized and useful. —*LS*

net rating: ☕☺💡 *overall:* **B-**

Kiernan's Wavefront Homepage

http://www.unm.edu/~kholland/

Kiernan created this ant-like creature called a Thorax using Wavefront.

While some net kids dabble in animation, others become MPEG movie geniuses. This site separates the greatness from the gunk with a collection of Kiernan Holland's own MPEG creations. Download and watch short animations of cyber insects, hand shadows, rolling walrus heads, and blazing infernos. And, after viewing these curiosities, check out the "Resumés of Wavefront Experts at UNM" section. Prospective employers are encouraged to give jobs to Kiernan's classmates. The next George Lucas or David Lynch could be an MPEG hack in disguise. —*BJB*

net rating: ☕☺💡 *overall:* **B**

May You Live in Interesting Times

http://adaweb.com/

The momentum of this site swings far and wide with energy, creativity, and an overwhelmingly large collection of images, artwork, and ideas. AdaWeb fills its server with digital exhibitions, examples of creative HTML design, and flurries of abstract concepts. At first, you'll need to trust your intuition to click with reckless abandon (few options are clearly indicated, though many are presented). But, as you find yourself pouring through the site, it becomes apparent that this sort of random access works well with all the presentations, and adds to its enjoyment factor. —*SK*

net rating: ☕☺💡 *overall:* **A**

New Mexico Album

http://www-swiss.ai.mit.edu/philg/new-mexico/album.html

Chili pepper vistas and orange sunsets saturate Philip Greenspun's online photo essay about New Mexico. This unique take on the Land of Enchantment explores the housing crunch, satellite dish invasions, and native people hiding from Sante Fe yuppies. The site is only one page long, with a few scattered sentences and a total of 17 photos. Created by the same guy who brought us the popular travel Web diary, Travels With Samantha, this photo journal falls short, and needs more personality to justify its download time. —*BJB*

net rating: ☕☺💡 *overall:* **C-**

Picture Project Gallery

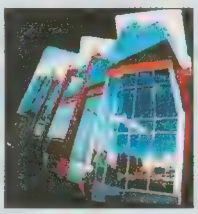
http://www.itp.tsoa.nyu.edu/~student/picture_projects/

Beautiful and immensely moving, this site serves as a photo documentary of the horrors and suffering that now mark life in Bosnia. The archive contains dozens of astonishing, gut-wrenching, and heart-warming photographs with simple (and painfully confrontational) commentary. It's an outstanding Web site to visit, and one that's guaranteed to instigate introspection. —*SK*

net rating: ☕☺💡 *overall:* **A**

Post Industrial Potrero Hill

http://www.dbarchitect.com/~db/g2/



The artists who've created this site live in a condominium development centered around a landscaped courtyard.

Examine the atmosphere within an artists' live-work space collective on San Francisco's Potrero Hill. Drown yourself in wonderful architectural drawings, or research the history of the group members as they fought to keep their previous space, a renovated hotel on Geary Street that was home to many artistic legends: Janis Joplin, Wes Wilton, and Terry Fox. This

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
☕ *Rich in content*	☺ *A visual 10!*	💡 *Rocket science material*
☕ *Fair amount of content*	😐 *Appealing , not great*	💡 *Not stupid*
☐ *Needs more content*	☹ *A dog*	💡 *Needs a brain*

site is well-designed and presented, although, when I wrote this review, the weekly newsletter was a few months behind. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Scultura Arts Forum

http://www.rain.org/~scultura/art.html

At Scultura, everything has a price. This online gallery is more like a shopping mart, encouraging visitors to buy art, pay for a membership, and browse classifieds. After swimming through the dollar signs, visitors can enjoy a broad spectrum

Judith Geiger's painting on silk is among the eye candy at Scultura Arts Forum.

of art from abstract oil paintings to Crayola portraits drawn on brown paper bags. The Global Arts links page is scarce — perhaps because this online gallery charges $199 to link your site to Scultura. If Scultura focused more on tuning in to, instead of cashing in on, the Internet artist community, this site would be worth its price in pixels. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Survival Research Laboratories

http://robotics.eecs.berkeley.edu/SRL/

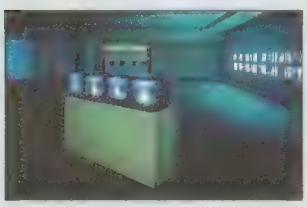
A blazing background supports the content of Survival Research Lab's post-apocalyptic-demolition-style-techno-art extravaganza. A mouthful of rusty nails and battling robotic droids are sure to captivate the fascination of at least a few sadistic net surfers. And the pages devoted to Burning Man — a giant wooden sculpture that is annually erected and torched in a Nevada desert — are exceptionally inspiring. Survival Research Labs lives on the fringe of an over-exploited bleeding edge, and its Web site will back this up. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Zero Tolerance

http://Zero.Tolerance.org/zt/ztfront

Zero Tolerance is a hodgepodge of creative efforts spanning digital media, photography, and philosophical goo — all rolled into a cool-looking but kind of messy package. It's hard to nail down the site's intentions, other than that it's a place to store ideas, however chaotically. Perhaps no other point is required. The images are sometimes spectacular and sometimes lacking, but overall, the site is entertaining, thoughtful, and worth visits from curious types. —*SK*



The images on Zero Tolerance include this, from the exhibit Strom by Andreas Troeger, in collaboration with Silvia Kirchhof.

net rating: *overall:* **A**

bizarre

Amazing Interactive Design Photoshop Art and Sound

http://www.renorex.com/

Rexalot and Hey Renee have created a rather peaceful spot on the Internet with their interactive gallery. In the Insect Nest, you'll be able to see and hear munching grubs and other insects flitting about. In Sea Sounds, a determined drinker wanders the lounge of a quasi-abandoned cruise ship looking for company. This gallery establishes a serene mood that is echoed throughout the site, making it more than just a collection of pictures and sounds. A warning: Even though they aren't very big, the graphics take a while to download. And don't even try accessing these pages with Lynx. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

DCIP Home Page

http://www.conspiracy.org/conspiracy/

Have you ever wondered who pulls the world's puppet strings? How can a hopeless drone like yourself ever hope to identify one of the "hidden masters"? The DCIP Home Page was created to unveil conspiracy with a set of pointers to the masters' "official" Web pages. While the concept and tone of this site are intriguing, there just isn't much material here. The Conspiracy must have deleted it. The people responsible for this page do a much better job with their Illuminati and Trilateral Commission home pages. Wait... Do I smell a conspiracy? —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Internet in a Baby

http://www.wideweb.com/baby/

Internet in a Baby is revolution in interface design. You are presented with a photo of a baby boy on the phone. Clicking on different parts of the baby send you to different spots on the Web. Click on the hair, and you go to Chewies Hair Cream page. Click on the right hand, and you go to the Skywalker-Worshipping Order of the Right Hand. You get the idea. My biggest gripe about the site is that the title is misleading. The picture isn't of a baby at all, but a five-year-old child. I guess Internet in a Pre-Schooler wasn't a catchy enough title. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Looking

http://muon.qrc.com/mdavis/

I looked and I looked, and I clicked on what I thought were tomatoes. The more I clicked, the smaller they got. Wow. When I finally got to the main page, I found a site organized by color — don't ask — filled with artsy poetry, and essays on music theory, modernism, and the Greeks. The site's aesthetic is clean and well-crafted, like a Mondrian painting. And, like that artist's work, it's just a little more exciting than brushing my teeth. But, hey, if you're into black turtlenecks and clove cigarettes, c'mon down! —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Mad Hatter

http://www.magi.com/~gray/mh.html

Mary Holiday, the Mad Hatter, runs a fan club for himself. And why not? While the site is mostly a collection of previous weird posts to various newsgroups, he fills the balance with FAQs and figures about his life and philosophy. Though the place lacks whiz-bang Web stuff (or even graphics), it's a monument to net-ego. Any net-god wannabe should visit and take careful notes: Chastise anyone who asks you a question, and talk about how cool you are. Incessantly. If you've got a smidgen of personality, people might eventually believe it. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Matthew and Jake's Adventures

http://www.mit.edu:8001/mj/mj.html

Matthew and Jake are two MIT students who first posted their collection of hypertext stories way back in 1994 and

This is Matthew and Jake surfing. Notice that no computers are involved.

haven't updated the site since. The illustrated romps are told in a children's book style that gets old quickly and makes me glad I didn't attend MIT. The Web is a bit different now in 1996, but if you feel nostalgia for a time when Mosaic was the hot thing, it might be worth a visit. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

PavePage

http://www.solon.com/~gutt/pave.the.earth/pave.html

A site devoted to the advancement of the Holy Cause of Paving the Earth. The Holy Order of Asphalt wishes to flatten mountains, fill oceans, and eliminate all animals except Blind White Cave Cows, which will be used for hamburger in the Beer and Burger communion. The Plan purportedly teaches knowledge of the twin pleasures, speed and convenience. Help this cause, and you will be rewarded; defy it and risk the wrath. This example of tongue-in-cheek ranting is a cut above most. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Punchy Advice

http://www.pacificrim.net/~lbrodie/punch/advice.html

Humans, mostly college students, submit questions about love and roommates, which are answered by a gaggle of quasi-muppets. Characters include a nerd, a babe, and some creatures of indistinguishable ethnic origin that are probably offending someone. Pictures of the characters mean excessive download times for paltry laughs. Questions are sometimes amusing; the answers usually less so. If you're interested in having these things appear at your party or corporate training video, you can contact Leo Brodie, who has thoughtfully supplied abundant marketing materials for his puppet company, Punch and Brodie. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

SpinnWebe

http://www.thoughtport.com/spinnwebe/

SpinnWebe brims with greatness. It's the home of the Dysfunctional Family Circus, in which you replace Bil Keane's normally rollicking cartoon captions with some of your own. Then there's this weird Magic 8-Ball thing that responds to your queries by sending you to a carefully chosen URL somewhere on the Web. Then there's the Nipple Server. Forget watching some boring coffee pot, dorm room, or fish bowl — this site has a new nipple posted everyday! View it, love it, and vote on its nippleness. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Illuminati

http://www.illuminati.org/

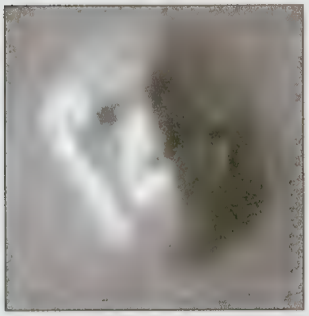
The Bavarian Illuminati are hell-bent on covertly taking over the world — and maybe they've already succeeded. Here, on their alleged "home page," they document their clandestine activities with video footage, pictures, links to "controlled" sites, and even secret text documents only available by e-mail. Don't cross them, though. A video of their dreaded Dropped Wooden Rabbit Torture made me rethink trashing their otherwise content-anemic site. It doesn't make them look that all-powerful. Their all-seeing pyramid on your dollar bill may just be the beginning. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Mars Earth Connection

http://www.pacifier.com/~dfiler/mars.html

Did little men construct a tower five miles high on the moon? Is that really George C. Scott's face staring up from Mars? Richard Hogland seems to think so, and this site provides the photographs to make you a believer. These images are freaky. The Mars-Earth Connection is a jumping-off point for those interested in these and other interplanetary enigmas that NASA refuses to acknowledge. The site itself is organized like a research paper. Long documentation is stuffed onto one page, and many



Can you see it? The "face" is located in the Cydonia Mensae region of Mars.

of the odd resources it cites aren't even on the Internet. Do they think I'm going to visit the library? —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Neoist Path

http://fub46.zedat.fu~berlin.de:8080/~catsin/Neoist_Text_Path.html

The Neoist way encourages plagiarism as it saves time and shows initiative. Had I known this sooner, I would have lifted whole segments for this review. Links are often confusing, as is a lot of the babble about the Seven by Nine Squares. Maybe basking in this disharmonious flux of gibberish is the point. If so, we all need to ask ourselves whether we have better things to do with our time than frequenting this site. If we *don't* have more pressing pursuits, we should hand over the planet to the dolphins right now. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Night Gallery

http://www.wbm.ca/users/kgreggai/index.html

This elaborate and visually first-rate home page is devoted to horror, true

The site creator's refrigerator contents offer clues, perhaps, to his psyche.

love, and body noise. By his own admission, the proprietor spends four hours a day maintaining his site. An extensive audio gallery is devoted to burps and farts. Other wonders include pictures of frightening food discovered in the back of his fridge. I get the impression site master Kevin is the Sara Winchester of the Web, driven by some odd demon to ceaseless construction of his page. I'd be truly worried — except he's fallen in love, which is another subject documented with meticulous detail. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Welcome to Spatula City

http://www.wam.umd.edu/~twoflowr

A wide variety of fictitious spatulas are on display, including the Five Spatulas of Fury, and the 12 Gauge Spatula Attachment, which is effective for cleaning even the most encrusted food off of any surface. You are encouraged to submit ideas for spatulas, but if managers Stefan and Jenny Gagne don't get back to you, it's because they don't like your idea — or are busy with their real lives. The site isn't limited to spatula fun; you'll also find odd links to such things as an online staring contest, where you go mano-a-mano with a large eyeball. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

You Have Found Us

http://fringeware.com/SchwaRoot/Schwa.html

Alien invasion paranoia as conceptual art. The site features products for defense against extraterrestrials, though, as you will soon learn, no place is safe. There's an abundance of striking black-and-white graphics, plus subtle and well-conceived humor free of the literary sledgehammers most Web site jokesters feel they must wield to get a laugh. A favorite was the fine print disclaimer that degenerates into a rant by the company's disgruntled lawyer. The site looks good and is easy to navigate. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

business help

HP Financial Services

http://www.dmo.hp.com/fsi/index.html

Hewlett-Packard is a huge company with many markets, many customers, and many clients. The Financial Services page is but one portion of its corporate Web site, and here you'll find an overview of products and "solutions" that HP offers to high-end financial, insurance, and retail banking clients. These clean, professional-looking (though rather sterile) pages

The site opens with a giant image map to lead you through the offerings.

describe HP's expertise and offerings in each area. If you're looking for descriptions and prices of actual products, most of the lingua franca is brochure-speak, although the Technical Library does contain useful product briefs, data sheets, and white papers. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Inter-Mark

http://www.tech-comm.com/techcomm/tch1009.html

Inter-Mark presents pages of text on company products: Internet access, Web page creation and maintenance, and online advertising and marketing services. A single internal link shoots you to a customer list, while other links send you to pages the company has built or manages. Richer information would be necessary to encourage customers to actually turn to Inter-Mark for business: What are the tools? How do they work? What specifically has the company done for each client? Lacking this, the visitor will find little reason to return. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

St Clair Financial Index

http://www.findex.com/

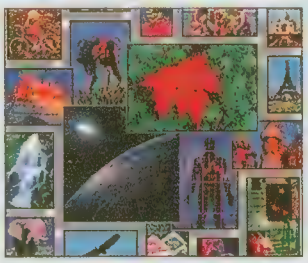
This site is a helpful front door filter for all the individual Web pages put up by financial institutions around the world. Search by category (i.e., banks, trust companies, stock exchanges.), or by geographical location. You can also enter a keyword. The drawback to the site is that the quality of company information you receive varies widely. Even so, if you want to research a U.S. financial market, compare services between Canadian banks, or locate an Australian insurer, this is a handy starting place. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Stock Solution

http://www.xmission.com:80/~tssphoto/

Surely the Web was made for sites like the Stock Solution, which licenses stock photography for one-time use. It's easy



This stock photo agency has a library of more than 200,000 images.

to preview images, search a database of some 200,000 photos, and locate a comprehensible price and order scheme. Because TSS provides digital images, you can request a custom search, which you'll receive via e-mail; this is more efficient, and much cheaper than the research fee most stock houses charge. You can search files alphabetically, or scan sample images from broad categories. A special bonus: The page is well-written, and well-executed. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Words of Mouth

http://www.hookup.net/~wom/

An excellent idea gone awry. This is a Canadian speakers' bureau that fronts the Web sites of a number of business consultants and motivators. The home page encourages editors seeking pithy quotes and articles to scan links below. Topics include teamwork, change, and risk-taking. But when you choose a link (actually, the name of a speaker), all you get is a marketing brochure and contact information, no words of wisdom. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

corporate

Adobe Systems

http://www.adobe.com/

The mainstay of desktop publishing software offers a professional-looking site that should inspire confidence in Adobe products, and provide tangible assistance to end-users. A well-designed home page offers sleek hot-button icons (as opposed to clumsy text links) that lead users to tech support resources, tips and techniques, and, most conveniently, *free software*. That's right: Plug-ins, filters, and printer drivers are available online for immediate downloading. When the site adds a search engine, it will realize its full potential. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

i33 Communications

http://www.i33.com/

Beginning with a stark white opening screen displaying nothing but a red admission ticket and a pragmatic credo — "Businesses establishing a presence on the Internet should be driven by opportunity, not fear." — i33 Communications sets a standard for tasteful, understated corporate Web collateral. Other Web page construction companies would do well to mimic i33's soft-sell sense of reserve. From images to text, the content is devoid of gratuitous self-promotion. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Mobil Corporation

http://www.mobil.com/

This site looks good, and offers some interesting material. There is a section on the Pegasus medal, an international literature award sponsored by Mobil. The only problem is that Mobil doesn't actually tell you anything about the books or authors that received the kudos. The site also offers a section that looks up your legislators, and helps you send them e-mail. Be ready for a healthy load of propaganda, my personal favorite being pictures and commentary on "Mobil's New Fast and Easy Nozzles." —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Penguin USA Home Page

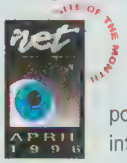
http://www.penguin.com/

This place is kind of bare, but it looks like a good beginning. The site seems to

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

Digital Planet

http://www.digiplanet.com/



Any corporate page from a Web site design company that purports to expand "the interactive medium's power to entertain, enlighten, and inform" had better present zeniths in content and technology. Digital Planet doesn't stumble. The company, which has designed areas for Philips Media, Universal Pictures, and MGM/UA Home Video, vaults its own self-imposed hurdles, and sets new standards with lavish artwork, technological gimmickry, and quick, intuitive navigation. Clearly, the people behind the coding have spent significant energy in studying online communi-

cation models. The fruits of their travail? State-of-the-art Web design. Anything less would be unpresentable.

An opening splash screen displays a seamless integration of texture-rich background illustration and accompanying iconography. Think Carlos Segura, the innovative graphic artist and type designer. Think album cover art from the likes of Xmal Deutchland and other members of the 4AD music catalog. Overall, the site's imagery quietly announces authority and sophistication. Likewise, the site's editors have posted tasteful, concise bits of text that spread the Digital Planet credo without bludgeoning surfers with gratuitous self-promotion. Via quickly downloaded tutorials — your browser should digest the bite-sized chunks quite easily — you'll learn about building online corporate identities in a sober, reserved manner. Couth insouciance is the name of the game here, and Digital Planet is a regular Cary Grant.

Or perhaps Digital Planet is a regular Thomas Edison. The company promises potential clients all the latest in Netscape and HTML trickery, and, behold, the bells and whistles are amassed in full force. When you travel to a portfolio area displaying links to the external pages of current clients, a server push mechanism launches an animated stream of the clients' company logos. The effect is sure to impress Web neophytes who have yet to discover this particular gimmick. And, of course, the site's main interfaces are devoid of archaic text links. Surfers instead navigate via custom-designed hot buttons.

Digital Planet has shown forethought in employing navigation devices that eschew outdated print-and-paper models. Finally, Digital Planet offers an intriguing sense of mystery. Since the site doesn't include extensive corporate "backgrounders," one leaves wanting to know more about the people behind the creativity. Unfortunately, the site doesn't encourage two-way communication. But perhaps Digital Planet just wants to be left alone while it tackles pressing projects at hand. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

be designed well. There is already info, some of it quite in-depth, on new releases. There is also a pretty good list of book links. If you are a teacher or librarian, make sure and check out the section on academic books. Like the rest of the site, there isn't a whole lot there, but Penguin's going in a good direction. If you're a book lover, keep an eye on Penguin; it may develop into a very good site. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

PriceCostco

http://www.pricecostco.com/

While PriceCostco conducts its buy-it-by-the-pallet business in cold, prefab warehouses, its Web site offers a warmer experience. A relatively snazzy splash screen leads you to innovative content items, including Web Words, an online contest (users employ highlighted words hidden throughout the site to compose their own poems), and Debate, a running statistical survey of consumers' political leanings. Returning to business at hand, the online delivery catalog is a great resource for small companies wanting to keep their break rooms stocked. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Silicon Graphics

http://www.sgi.com/

While Silicon Surf's content transcends the marketing-oriented requisites of a corporate Web site, its artistic appeal and HTML aptitude fall somewhat short of what we expect from the leader of computer graphics technology. Yes, you'll find comprehensive answers to esoteric technical questions. Yes, you'll find copi-

Tons of freeware and good step-by-step instructions distinguish this site.

ous amounts of freeware. And, yes, you'll find end-user case studies, image galleries, and step-by-step instructions for off-the-wall design projects. But the site lacks a high-tech, 21st century aesthetic. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Sun Microsystems

http://www.sun.com/

Any corporate site that repeatedly uses the terms "productivity" and "solutions" is obviously geared to the suit-and-tie set. Likewise, any site that pushes a 2.7 MB .WAV file speech from the company CEO is clearly aiming to trumpet its Wall Street image. But don't fault Sun for highlighting its dry marketing collateral. If you happen to stumble upon the SunWorld Online hot button, you'll find valuable content for regular old end-users who *actually use* Sun hardware and software. Overall, the site is easily navigated and downloads quickly; a nifty search engine shoots you straight to desired destinations. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Synergy Production's Home Page

http://www.synprod.com/

Peter Nowell *is* Synergy Productions, a humble San Jose, CA consulting firm that designs and creates trade show presentations, 3D animations, CD-ROMs, and "architectural walk-throughs." By clicking various items on an image map of a living room scene, viewers can learn more about Synergy's services. RealAudio files offer real-time commentary from two *completely satisfied* customers evangelizing how Peter changed their lives. Surfers can even download an animation of one of Peter's 3D architectural tours. While the site boasts plenty of bells and whistles, it eschews artistic risk-taking. It's a comfortable resource, perhaps, for the suit-and-tie set. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Saturn Site

http://www.saturncars.com/

The folks at Saturn have worked hard to develop a homey kind of image. Their Web sight manages to continue this tradition quite well. There is a lot of info about each car in the Saturn line, including fairly detailed technical specs. The site also has a good section detailing the Rails to Trails project, and information about the Saturn bike team. Perhaps my favorite feature was the database (support group?) of Saturn owners, which the company claims will soon be extended to allow customers to communicate with each other directly. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Volkswagen

http://www.volkswagen.com/

Volkswagen has always prided itself on being eclectic when compared to other

Volkswagen mourns the passing of Jerry Garcia with this tribute.

car manufacturers. Its Web site continues this tradition. The opening page is composed of a series of intentionally vague image maps. You're supposed to just click around and check things out. Eventually you'll find press releases, a Volkswagen museum, the current line of cars, and several other goodies (including a Jerry Garcia tribute). Volkswagen fans will love this site — except those using a low bandwidth, who will hate the large file sizes. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Wal-Mart Stores Inc

http://www.wal-mart.com/

Wal-Mart hasn't exactly *endeared* itself to the body politic: "60 Minutes" skewered the megastore chain for ravaging large chunks of small-town America, and last year Usenet patrons almost erected alt.activism.walmart, a newsgroup for employee gripes and war stories. This explains this site's focus on *good* press — hypertext links that lead you to glowing, self-congratulatory P.R. on cultural diversity and community involvement. Still, Wal-Mart can't be faulted for protecting its identity. It *can* be faulted, however, for failing to provide product and sales information on all the household staples it sells nationwide. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Welcome to Corel

http://www.corel.com/

Corel, a Canadian software company, is perhaps most famous for its suite of art programs. Its flagship product, CorelDraw, a cheap and quite awesome draw application, unfortunately lends itself to a "typical look." Users tend to employ the same amazing special effect filters in the same way, and resulting imagery often screams, "I was created on CorelDraw!" Such is the case with this site's opening screen, an unspectacular presentation that lacks artistic flair, and leads to a surprisingly brief menu of content items. Thankfully, Corel does provide a stout area devoted to technical support — a must for all those Windows-based applications. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Welcome to Honda

http://www.honda.com/

Honda seems to be very proud of its racing team. What would you expect from a company whose founder almost died in a racing accident? The racing section is quite good; fans won't want to miss it. Surprisingly, this site does not offer very in-depth info about Honda cars, and it isn't readily apparent how to access what is available. (Here's a tip: Click on the car images at the bottom of the Model line-up pages). Precise info on current lease terms and specials should be very helpful to those who care. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

This site's high point is the auto racing section, which contains bios of great drivers, plus race dates and amazing photos.

Welcome to Texaco Online

http://www.texaco.com/

How do you make petroleum exciting? Texaco apparently doesn't have an answer. This is essentially a typical corporate Web page: short history of the company, abbreviated shareholder report, the mandatory "we are so environmentally aware" section... You get the idea. The site's high point is definitely the auto racing section, which includes daily reports, schedules, pictures, driver bios, and other racing info. Texaco racing fans will love it. There is also a nifty little 10-page document that will tell you everything you ever wanted to know about oil. A must read for home mechanic types. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

education

AcademicNet

http://www.academic.com/

Instructors should welcome this site, which fosters a marketplace of ideas specific to education. Now, educators can collaborate on projects that focus on using technology to enhance student achievement. Teachers can congregate here, and bypass the aging administrative hierarchies that don't employ computers. Call it the "education underground," if you will. The site requires registration to obtain the full resources available. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

American Montessori Society

http://www.seattleu.edu/~jcm/montessori/menu_link.html

Most parents and educators have, at one time or another, become disgusted with the state of education in the United States. A small but significant minority has opted for innovative Montessori schools, which follow the lead of Italy's Dr. Maria Montessori. This site fulfills three purposes: promotion (endlessly) of the Montessori method; acting as conduit to the American Montessori Society; and providing a list of public Montessori schools. This last 76K tidbit (probably the most useful for most visitors) is found at the bottom of the home page. But wander about: You'll be surprised at what you'll learn. —*TG*

The educational method espoused here started with Dr. Maria Montessori.

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Elementary Spanish Curriculum

http://www.veen.com/Veen/Leslie/Curriculum/

Are you looking for an online source for Spanish language instruction? Well, you won't find it here. Instead, educator Leslie Veen outlines her method of teaching Spanish to elementary and middle school children. The one-page document includes goals for grammar, vocabulary, and cultural understanding, from the point of view of the teacher. It's not that this site is badly done — the curriculum is as good as anything you'll get from your local high-school teacher. But that's all there is to it, and, as such, it's of limited interest. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Ethnologue Database

http://www-ala.doc.ic.ac.uk/~rap/Ethnologue/

One of my favorite books is *Languages of the World*, by the genius lexicographer Kenneth Katzman. It includes information on several hundred of the world's 6,500 languages, with — and this is the good part — examples of each. The Ethnologue Database is a similar project, minus the examples. On this Web site, the world's languages are cataloged according to name, linguistic family, and region in which they are spoken. Despite the shallowness of information on individual languages and some inaccuracies, the Ethnologue Database belongs on every linguist's hotlist. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

eWorld Learning Community

http://www.eworld.com/education/resources/

The eWorld Learning Community has gathered an impressive set of quality links under categories such as News Rack, Apple Education Resource, Museum, and School House. Unfortunately, links are pretty much all this site has to offer. It's misleading for eWorld to claim that this is its Learning Community. The links belong to the Internet; the site should be called the Internet Learning Community. But enough on-semantics. The design is tasteful, but, save a search engine, there are no cool technical devices to add any pizzazz to this site. —*WKC*

eWorld Learning Community has a great set of links, but that's about it.

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Home-Ed-Kids

http://sara.zia.com/

So, you think you're going to find treatises on the advantages of home schooling at this site? Not on your noodle. This page is dedicated to the kids themselves. It is an area in which home-schooled youths meet and interact, just as their public school friends interact on physical playgrounds. Much of the site is developed by preteens. The content is uneven, but when it is good, it soars — and the technical sophistication is astounding. (Chat rooms, bulletin boards, image maps, and search engines all play a part.) Get bowled over by incredible depths of information when you visit the Parent Directories. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Homespun Web of Home Educational Resources

http://www.ICtheWeb.com/hs-web/

Homeschooling — do-it-yourself education, if you will — is how a select few parents gain more control of their kids' education. This site is a clearinghouse on that subject, with special emphasis on archival data like FAQs, newsgroups, and lists of contact people. While a high percentage of homeschooling proponents teach their kids at home for religious reasons, the site is mostly unbiased on such matters. It *is* heavily Texas-oriented, though, as that state seems to have the most active homeschooling movement. While its content isn't terribly deep, the Homespun Web is a good place for concerned parents to start. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Internet College Exchange

http://www.usmall.com/college/

This is a resource primarily geared toward high school juniors and seniors who are trying to find a good college — although it would also be helpful for parents who are trying to nudge aging progeny out of the house. The concept behind the site is solid, although content is sparse. It's certainly a page that's aching to grow. A snazzy search utility provides names of colleges based on entered criteria. The best content on the site can be found in The Dunce's Cap, an informative and irreverently written newsletter about college admissions. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Invention Dimension

http://web.mit.edu/invent/

Besides offering some crucial information I needed about the inventor of Bakelite (Leo Baekeland, known affectionately as the "Father of Plastics"), this site had little of interest. I expected to find profiles of wacky inventors and their crazy projects — you know, the inventions we laugh at today, but can't live without tomorrow. But no, the site just offers information on a few famous inventors,

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

Serious rather than wacky inventors are the focus here.

and links to invention information, plus winners of the prestigious Lemelson-MIT Prize. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Kaplan Educational Centers

http://www.kaplan.com/

Kaplan — famous for helping underachievers earn admission to their parents' swanky alma maters — has an extremely useful Web site. To be fair, there are plenty of people who chose educational paths to law and medicine a little late, and definitely benefited from Kaplan testing materials. The site features summaries of the current climates for admission into professional college

Learn about your chances of getting into a swanky college.

programs. Kaplan books and software can be purchased online, and a special feature section displays an offbeat sense of humor. Though a commercial site, Kaplan offers invaluable free resources for those interested in professional development. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Library of Congress

http://www.loc.gov/

Amazing content. If you want to feel like a part of the democratic process, go here and peel through the Thomas legislative database. Read the actual text of the bills that you *think* you know something about. There is also a great bibliography of published works that can be searched by title or name. The library features exhibits on specific themes, such as women in World War II. And, if that isn't enough, there's also a great image archive. The main drawback is that the site isn't very intuitively organized; it does require some effort to locate points of interest. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Nellie Mae Loan Link Resource for Student Loan Info

http://www.nelliemae.org/

Nellie Mae runs a tight ship with no loose ends, and no extraneous information or pages. It's a very streamlined site — and this is not my ironic way of saying there's little content. You'll find a number of pages filled with very practical information about student loans, focusing on the student loans Nellie Mae specifically offers. There is also a page with info on when to start applying for loans, and some brief explanations of the different kinds of loans. This site could be more in-depth. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Nizhoni School for Global Consciousness

http://www.nets.com/nizhoni/

This is a one-page information board for a school located in Santa Fe, NM. There isn't much reason to go here unless you feel a strong need to attend classes that teach people to "follow their hearts to their purest source of intelligence, the Higher Self." That's about all the information this site offers, but there is a book you can order (off-line) that will tell you more about this Navajo-inspired course of study. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Peterson's Education Center

http://www.petersons.com/

Wow. It's not often that information resource companies give you full access to their material via the Web: There's still no effective way to make money off of it. Peterson's does, however, providing a huge stock of info about schools, summer programs, and business management. As with most pages, this site is under continual construction; you'll frequently be greeted by a "We're sorry..." message. But the areas that *are* fully implemented — such as those with Graduate School information — are gorgeous, complete, and easy-to-use. Peterson's Education Center is a gem that will only get better — until you have to pay for it. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

The Student Guide: 1995-96

http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/

For most students, the most difficult hurdle of higher education isn't the

This U.S. Department of Education site is loaded with info on how to get a loan.

course work — it's finding the money to pay for it. A lot of college funding ultimately comes from the federal government in the form of loans and grants. But how can you learn more about financial aid? That's where the Student Guide comes in. Released each year by the Department of Education, it tells you how to qualify, whom to contact, and how you can expect to repay the loans. This Web site is really just a more "browsable" form of a 126K document, which is also available for downloading. Regardless of how you view the Student Guide, every prospective college student should check it out. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

http://www.uiuc.edu/

O.K., Web users, let's collectively bow in the direction of UIUC, host to the National Center for Supercomputing Applications. Without the bright boys and girls at NCSA, the Web would not be what it is today. Sadly, I can't say if that's a good or bad thing. But for a site of such distinction, UIUC lacks wild HTML tricks. It *is* big and fast, however, and provides so much information, you could spend a few days just trying to find your way around. You'll discover complete college catalog-type information, plus the university's library site. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

UT Austin Web Central

http://www.utexas.edu/

Austin can be considered the birthplace of the "slacker" archetype: a center for high-tech companies, one of the few progressive cities in Texas, and, rumor has it, there's a university down there, too. Well, blow me down. UT is a gargantuan university, and its Web presence reflects its size. The site's internal search engine bears this out: A search for the word "racquetball" returned 17 references, mostly on students' personal pages. Altogether, there are more than 25,000 Web pages on 170 servers (so they say, anyway), including everything you ever wanted to know about UT. Beware the poorly designed image maps. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Word Page

http://users.aol.com/jomnet/words.html

Let's award Word Page an "E" for effort — although I don't know how to factor an "E" into a GPA. The purpose of this site is to help people learn 10 new words a week — an admirable enterprise. Unfortunately, it doesn't help if you already know the words the site's editor happened to pick. Also, the definitions provided are a bit weak, consisting of a short phrase or sentence. It wouldn't take much effort, and certainly not much space, to include full dictionary definitions. And, finally, the misspellings littered throughout the site aren't going to impress any educators out there. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Antonio Banderas

http://www.sju.edu/~delvalle/antonio.html

I know too many otherwise level-headed women who swoon at the thought of Antonio. Come to think of it, I know too many men who crave him, too. Banderas inspires the rabid devotion of which publicists dream. He's a pop icon for the 90s, oozing sex *and* diversity. A net search of Tony's name turned up dozens of hits, this page being a typical

Heartthrob Antonio Banderas appeals to the masses because of his passion, intensity, and power, according to this site.

fan site. You'll find movie profiles, a few interviews clipped from magazines, and blind adoration of his Holiness — the usual fan tribute. There isn't any real reason to visit this site, except perhaps as part of a sociological study of celebrity culture. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Flicker

http://www.sirius.com/~sstark/

For many of us, adolescence was a time of discovery. Thoughts of sex, identity, and acne consumed our waking hours. A few souls, however, were bitten by a different bug: film-making. Flicker is Web-

Learn of films and videos that transgress boundaries of traditional viewing.

central for members of the film underworld — those individuals who understand cinema as something more than a collection of monolithic Hollywood corporations. Listings of the venues, people, and products central to "alternative cinema" make this site a pleasure to visit. I discovered several films I absolutely must track down. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Hong Kong Cinema

http://egret0.stanford.edu/hk/index.html

The Hong Kong film industry produces some of the most violent, action-packed films being released today. It is therefore no surprise that these films have inspired a fanatical following among the Stateside hip and slack. This is a must-visit site for anyone interested in the genre. You'll find industry happenings, an extensive database, a large collection of links to related sites, and more. You'll even find the weekly Hong Kong box office figures. This site looks great and there is a wealth of information. I only wish I enjoyed Hong Kong films. Oh well. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Kubrick, A Multimedia Film Guide

http://www.lehigh.edu/~pjl2/films/kubrick.html

I don't understand the nuances of copy-

right law, fair use doctrine, and other related legal constructs. It is therefore my own ignorance that drives me to ask this question: How do sites like this survive the scrutiny of the copyright police? This is a fine site, with numerous images and sound files from each of Kubrick's films, and a brief though helpful collection of related links. The page creator is clearly a fan, but I doubt this status in any way shields him or her from legal scrutiny. Check it out while you can — it may not be standing much longer. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Low Res Film Festival

http://www.hyperreal.com/lowres/

The table of contents and menu bars all flaunt superior graphics, and the page layout and site organization are easy on the eyes and a pleasure to navigate. Follow upcoming film festivals with clips and mini — very mini — summaries of what's playing. A Tools section advertises

The Low Res film and video site uses great graphics to inspire independent film makers.

cameras, editing equipment, and similar hardware of the film-related ilk. Still, portions of the site remain thin in content, and lack the depth of coverage a diehard independent film fanatic might require. A good site nonetheless. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Movie Review Query Engine

http://www.cinema.pgh.pa.us/movie/reviews/

The Web provides an ideal soapbox for every rube and cracker to exercise his or her God-given right to voice an opinion on any and all matter of note. Movie reviewing is an especially popular topic, so it was with trepidation that I approached this site. To my surprise, I discovered one of the most useful movie index interfaces on the Web: plot summaries, reviews from numerous sources, movies ranked by genre — all well-presented and arranged. And, if a particular production crew member's work impresses you, a list of his or her other film credits is a link away. Now *that's* comprehensive! —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Movies

http://www.conxtion.com/admin/Jeff_Renzi/Movies/Movies.html

Humble Jeff Renzi aims to teach the Internet community all he knows about the movies he digs most: *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Clerks*, and *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. Could Jeff Renzi be a young man — *perhaps a college student* — with too much free time? Who knows? Jeff Renzi is, however, a well-organized soul who publishes comprehensive guides to the above films. You'll find actor bios, stills from the movies, and RealAudio of character dialogue. But — oops — you will not find interesting, stylized writing or personal charm of any sort. Avoid the world of Jeff Renzi. You can find more compelling material elsewhere. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Museum Arrakeen

http://www.princeton.edu/~cgilmore/dune/

Museum Arrakeen is a site for fans of *Dune*, Frank Herbert's tireless sci-fi epic that transcended literary conventions to describe in precise detail an imaginary planet replete with its own biology, history, language, and politics. The site's director, Christian Gilmore, deserves hardy praise for a presentation that follows Herbert's creative lead: As you navigate this space, you tour not a Web page, but a museum located on the sands of Dune itself. Fortunately, this contrived charade never stumbles into hokiness. When Gilmore augments his amazingly complete site with more interesting graphics, his overall rating should jump a full letter grade. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Star Wars Home Page at UPENN

http://force.stwing.upenn.edu:8001/~jruspini/starwars.html

Ask any technogeek to name the film

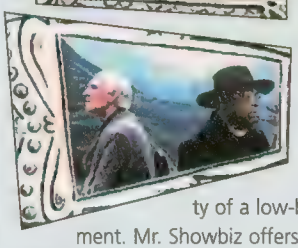
SITE OF THE MONTH
net
APRIL 1996

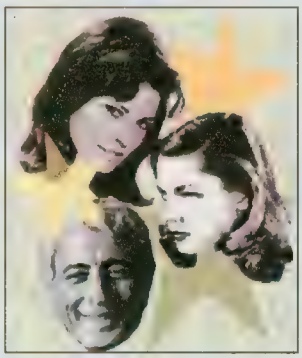
Mr. Showbiz

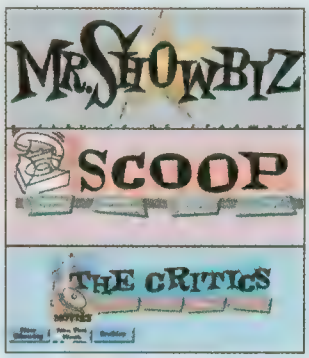
http://showbiz.starwave.com/showbiz/toc.html

Lights, camera, action. Mr. Showbiz ranks as one of the best entertainment-related Web pages. While considerable focus is applied to the film industry — reviews, coming attractions, gossip, and historical yada yada — the site does stretch its wings to include music, television and theater.

There may not be anything too sparkly or enticing about the graphics at Mr. Showbiz, but there is definitely something to be said for the speed and simplicity of a low-bandwidth treatment. Mr. Showbiz offers a crisp, clean feel, creative icons, and consistency throughout.







I'm slightly embarrassed to admit that my favorite section of the site is Scoop, an area devoted to the trashy rumor mill of the entertainment arena. I found the mounds of ridiculous, useless information to be magnetically captivating, much to my anti-tabloid dismay.

In late January, I learned that Tom Selleck will be a special guest star on the trophy-winning pop TV series "Friends" (as Monica's older boyfriend), and the original Power Rangers are getting killed off for new wonder heroes that "are much more powerful, and a lot sexier, too."

Mr. Showbiz has also built a nice area to archive Oscars from 1927 to the present. While I wish there were a few more photos — it's always nice to get flashes of Bette's baby blues — the current star bios more than make up for the lack of historical imagery. Woody Allen is a Sagittarius with three kids, and Drew Barrymore is a Pisces with a new boyfriend. The Daily Dose is entertaining, too, as it refers to "this date in history" — who was born, died, married, divorced, on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, etc., etc., etc. Sure, it's trivial, but that's the nature of the beast, right?

Also lodged within The Daily Dose is a vocabulary builder. I don't exactly consider the word "rue" (the entry when I checked) to be scintillatingly challenging, especially given the example sentence reading: "I rue the day I asked O.J. to try on those blasted gloves." However, other words archived from Doses past — Dharma bums, Apocrypha, and chattel — proved more interesting.

Mr. Showbiz may not stimulate your neurons or captivate the philosopher within, but it delivers what it promises — an entertaining look at entertainment — and it does so extremely well. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

This *Star Wars* site contains images missing from the famous movies.

that first inspired dreams of nerdiness, and the answer will always be the same: *Star Wars*. I saw it more than 30 times on the big screen, never growing tired of the special effects. Who cared about the story? The movie inspired two sequels, computers games, trading cards, and action toys — a cultural juggernaut. This site addresses all aspects of the phenomenon, from interviews with director George Lucas to the latest game demo. Numerous AV files are available, as are scripts and principal biographies. A fan's dream and copyright lawyer's nightmare. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Biz

http://www.bizmag.com/

The word on the street is that film professionals, wanna-be film professionals, and film fanatics should be surfing the BizMag Web site. Dazzling its readers with flashy colors, gossip, job boards, and the latest, greatest movie trailers available online, Biz speaks with authority, and backs itself up with comprehensive coverage. Some of the icons and design decisions are less than spectacular, and some of the pages are harder to read than they need to be, but overall, Biz is a great site for film industry current events. —*SK*

The Biz provides amazing graphics and more than enough content to make film makers happy.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Cult Shop

http://lasarto.cnde.iastate.edu/Movies/CultShop/

While visually benign, the Cult Shop provides a near-daunting number of links to info on cult movies, videos, and TV shows. Topics are cross-referenced *ad nauseum*, and the end result is a clear, detailed schematic of the entire cult media machine. Content includes tireless dossiers on actors, writers, and directors; reviews from critics; and links to "official" sites run by corporate P.R. offices. Web surfers can even cast votes for their favorite cult classics. While the site's attitude and verve runs a bit dry, the Cult Shop is nonetheless a valuable resource for quick, comprehensive information. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Documentary Film Group Home Page

http://http.bsd.uchicago.edu/doc/

With such an impressive title, one would assume that this site would provide the final word on documentary cinema. Not so. The Documentary Film Group is a University of Chicago student organization that serves its local community. The site's content includes a calender listing for college screenings, links to *real* documentary film sites, and not much more. While the students at U. of C. are surely busy folks, they may want to invest some time in posting the insightful commentary that undoubtedly appears in their theses and terms papers. Remember, kids, the *World Wide* Web is watching. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

The Official Peril Productions Home Page

http://www.wam.umd.edu/~ssparks/peril/peril2.html

"How," I asked myself, "did I live this long without encountering Peril Productions?" This Web site leads me to believe that the site's brain trust includes some of the most creative and funny people alive. Hilarious images, a clever FAQ, and cheeky profiles had me laughing out loud. This is the first site I've come across that tempts me to open my wallet — I simply must see these films. I will not sleep until I have seen *Peril at Castle Eifenstein*. Judging by its plot summary, this could be the movie I've been waiting for all of my life. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Addventure

http://www.addventure.com/addventure/

The site's creators encourage you to consider Addventure not a Multi-User Dungeon or Role-Playing Game, but instead, a "shared story." And, as a shared story, content is only as compelling as the contributions of those involved. Personally, I appreciate entries like, "You hear a disembodied voice from the heavens say, 'I am such a moron. Maybe one day I'll learn to proofread.' " Overall, Addventure could offer newbies more helpful instructions. And, as it's a text adventure, the site is devoid of graphics. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Bill Burcham's Champions Gallery

http://www.sjhs.org/billrb/champions/

The wacky world of role-playing games that began with Dungeons and Dragons has expanded to include many different genres, including, now, superhero comix. The game *Champions* lets players design custom superheroes and other peripheral material. Bill Burcham has created a Web archive where players can share such creations. The site's design and concept are solid, but the lack of contributions suggests the page is unknown — or the game just doesn't have that much popularity. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

CJS's Unofficial Descent WWW Page

http://web.one.net/~cjs/descent.html

It's good that CJS calls this an "unofficial" page, because the creators and distributors of *Descent* would have good reason to be peeved if this single page of links was misidentified as "official" material. Granted, the links send you to useful content like the *Descent* Cheat Utility — anybody who's gone careening around the mining tunnels of *Descent* will appreciate the extra help that the Cheat Utility provides. But, overall, this site offers no intrinsic content, just pathways to richer territory. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Grendel's Gaming Lair Main

http://www.csra.net/jononkeyz/games/gaming.htm

If you're specifically interested in PC gaming, enter Grendel's Lair — or, more precisely, labyrinth — but do so with caution. As of press time, the Lair was rife with "404 File Not Found" errors and areas under construction. Content (*available* content, that is) includes downloadable game demos; tips, tricks and cheats; and links to slick corporate sites from the likes of id, Interplay, and ActiVision. Overall, the Lair is a middling resource for the PC-centric, and wields an amateurish, slightly juvenile, Dungeons-and Dragonsy aesthetic. This may be a turn-off for Mech-heads looking for a more postmodern approach. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

History of Home Video Games

http://www.sponsor.net/~gchance/

Here's a stellar example of a site that triumphs by sheer force of its written content. Check out the droll Pong FAQ — "Q: What's the little white thing on the left side of the screen? A: That is the 'paddle.' It is used to bounce the 'ball.' " Plus, there's information on Sony's state-of-the-art PlayStation. The historical timeline is a good read for all gamers. The Bally Astrocade. The Milton Bradley Microvision. The Mattel Aquarius. Learn about all the ill-fated systems that waxed and waned before Nintendo and Sega developed their market strangleholds in the late 80s. —*JP*

A link takes you to the Classic Arcade Games site (http://sharkie.psych.indiana.edu/rynersw/vids/vids.html), where you can revel in these old arcade games.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

MacDOOM Park

http://www.gac.edu/~bgustafs/macdoom_park.html

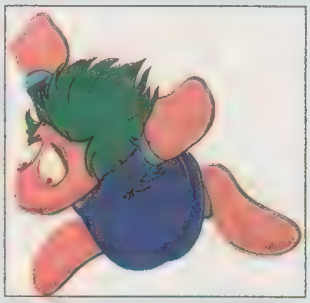
When *Doom II* arrived for the Mac, friends of the *other* platform finally got a chance to contribute to id Software's cultural phenomenon. Now, Mac-oriented Doomheads can surf an excellent site that properly represents the Doom gestalt. MacDOOM Park excels in brevity, and offers wild background textures, cool button icons, and concise, valuable content items, including cheats, downloadable files, and links to other cool Web pages (check out Ah, Hell, a commentary on *Doom* from a feminine perspective). Just one gripe: Since the site *looks* so cool, one would expect more technical bells and whistles. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Oh No The Lemmings Games Web Page

http://stud1.tuwien.ac.at/~e8826423/Lemmings.html

Lemmings. Kids, parents, twentysomething hipsters — everybody loves lemmings. These little green-haired cuties dressed in Dr. Denton jammies frolic across all software platforms, just waiting to be rescued by smitten gamers. While this site does in fact provide the down-low on Lemmings minutiae, it's poorly constructed. Children — shoot, even adults — may have trouble navigating the confusing barrage of text links. The graphic underplay? That's O.K. All gaming sites would do well to minimize the artwork, and instead focus on quickly accessed information. —*JP*



Cute little Lemmings adorn the pages of this site.

net rating: *overall:* **C**

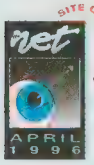
Paolo Marcucci's Shadowrun Archive

http://www.interware.it/users/paolo/sr2/index.html

Here's yet another role-playing game archive on the Web. But this one has pages and pages of information and resources for the game *Shadowrun*, which is set in a cyberpunk future. Paolo Marcucci has used the new HTML Frames function to organize his site, and it works very well. I highly recommend visiting the archive with a browser that supports Frames. The site is based in

B.J. Zanzibar's World of Darkness

http://silver.ucs.indiana.edu/~adashiel/wod/wod.html



Don't let the name fool you. *The World of Darkness* isn't the online interpretation of some angst-ridden existentialist's world view. Likewise, B.J. Zanzibar is simply a pseudonym, or, in this case, a keyboard name. I'm sure some of you old-timers are saying "duh" at this point, but it must be made clear that *World of Darkness* is actually a role-playing game (RPG), as well as an über-game system for a collection of individual games titled *Vampire*, *Werewolf*, *Mage*, *Wraith*, and *Changeling*.

B.J. Zanzibar is Abe Dashiell, an avid gamer, computer consultant and recent graduate of Indiana University. Dashiell has gathered together as many RPG resources as he could find, and placed them in this single, huge site. Most of the material is gleaned from the Internet, where it was originally posted on the newsgroups alt.games.whitewolf and rec.games.frp.storyteller.

Dashiell emphasizes that *World of Darkness* is vastly different from the fantasy RPGs that follow the *Dungeons and Dragons* model, in which players spend their time killing monsters and finding treasures. He calls *World of Darkness* a "sociopathic vision of our own world. Everything seems normal on the surface, but you don't have to dig very deep to run into something rotten." The person in charge of a *World of Darkness* game is called a "storyteller," and players' characters are supernatural creatures, such as vampires and werewolves. Players of the game tend to be older than most RPGers, and more interested in character interaction and development.

On this site, there are three to six sections for each game, with a multitude of articles in each section. Anyone involved in creating a *World of Darkness* game will find tons of valuable material here, all of it organized extremely well. Dashiell took the trouble to learn how to build HTML Frames, and incorporated them into the structure of the site. His Frames facilitate an index that resides on the left side of the page, so now you can jump from one section of the site to another. Subtopics are displayed along the bottom for easier navigation within a game section. If you're curious about RPGs, visit this site. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

Italy, but I didn't notice any lag in connection time. Wow, are RPGers really all sitting around their basements with laptops these days? —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Braintainment Center

http://world.brain.com/index.cgi/UN/Index.html

When I discovered that this site hawks a game called *THINKfast*, I initially concluded that the Braintainment Center is a mere software promotion venture. Further exploration, however, revealed much more material. Most of the content describes new concepts on how the brain works, and justification on how THINKfast can improve cranial operations. Interesting stuff; certain to raise some skeptical eyebrows. An online intelligence test may make visitors feel inferior. It certainly had this effect on me. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Chess Connection

http://www.easynet.co.uk/worldchess/home.htm

The Chess Connection is the site of sites for chess fans, as it publishes chess columns from various British publications, such as *The Spectator*, *The Independent*, and *The New Statesman*.

With the latest on chess championships and software, this is a supreme site for spectators and players alike.

While it's a great repository for game stratagem, it would be nice if the Connection included an online archive. The Chess Connection Shop has one of the more interesting uses of Frames I have seen. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The Pinball Archive

http://pinball.cc.cmu.edu/

Closely related to the newsgroup rec.games.pinball, this Web site stores the collective wisdom of people serious enough about pinball to discuss their passion on the Internet. I spent a few hours going through the rule sheets posted here, finding the ins and outs of

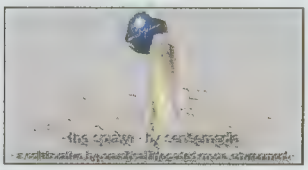
my favorite machines. Besides just offering rules, the site also lists the Easter Eggs hidden throughout various games. For some wacky reason, the site includes a search utility — I guess so you can get back to the tables as soon as possible. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Sprawl Homepage

http://sensemedia.net/sprawl

Cyber-pundits have long evangelized the virtues of virtual communities. You know the spiel: sharing, bonding, nurturing a sense of togetherness in a postmodern hell. It's just one big sticky group hug. But some Intermaniacs just want to have fun. Enter the Sprawl, a comfortable intersection between gaming and community building. Within the Sprawl, players can navigate RPG-like environs,



Sprawl lets you navigate Role-Playing Game-like environments.

help expand the environs, and chat with other residents. Compared to similar areas, this site boasts superior imagery and well-conceived organization, which fosters smoother navigation. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

The Virtual Multimedia Interactive Mystery Theater

http://www.cris.com/~bumm/intro.html

Rule Number One: When constructing a voluminous interactive story with image maps, use a *very* fast server. Rule Number Two: Provide players with clear-cut objectives. Rule Number Three: Make sure *all* your links work. Rule Number Four: If you include sound files, make sure they're worth their download time. And finally, Rule Number Five: Don't link to pages with big graphics that don't advance plot lines. This site broke every rule. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Wacky Hexen Page

http://www.zensoft.com/Raven/Hexen.html

Hexen, like *Doom*, has garnered great popularity among the net set, and Web sites filled with helpful *Hexen* information abound. The Wacky Hexen Page is indeed wacky, but it also provides a very nicely formatted set of cheat codes that helps you overcome any obstacles you may encounter in the game. There's also a group of recipes that were somehow extracted from the game, and a very fast search utility for help on specific topics. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Wacky WWW Adventure

http://ugweb.cs.ualberta.ca/~hubick/adventure/adventure.cgi

Although the concept behind this site is simplistic, the site itself is brilliantly executed and boasts a ton of content. Here you'll find an interactive story that begins with a single paragraph ending with you, the protagonist, walking out your front door. Now you're afforded 170 choices as to what you want to do next. At least it was up to 170 when I last visited. Since multiple users can add their own choices, the whole affair is fluid — and some of the contributions are naturally infantile. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

health

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

http://atsdr1.atsdr.cdc.gov:8080/atsdrhome.html

This site is worth a visit, but first you must fight your way through a generous sprinkling of government acronyms to learn what ATSDR stands for, and that it's part of the U.S. Public Health Service. The registry works like this: Type in the name of a substance, like fingernail polish, and you'll get a helpful fact sheet on toluene, the toxic ingredient it contains. This is a good stop for science students and researchers who want to learn more about the everyday toxic substances with which we all live. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Chinese Herb and Health

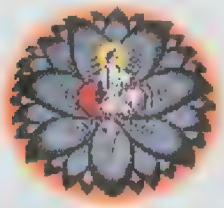
http://geog.hkbu.edu.hk/health/

The wonderfully named Bosco Tsang of Hong Kong Baptist University would like you to subscribe to this discussion forum on Chinese herbology and health, and you may do so from here. There's not much else on the page, except for links to the host server and links to a couple of external pages. It is one of the few pages currently available in English and Chinese. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Kundalini Resource Center

http://aloha.net/~bpeay/kundalini/xindex.html



Click on this image on the home page, and you'll enter the Resource Center.

Kundalini is a form of yoga that focuses on the coiled energy at the base of the spine, and the reservoir of psychic and emotional energy to be gleaned from its proper treatment and use. This page from a Norwegian Kundalini practitioner serves as a primer. It contains a FAQ, a few book reviews, a discussion area, and some articles. It's all text, however. There's no way to study the various poses and gestures used. Nor are there even descriptions of poses. (This may be because proponents say Kundalini should be supervised by a qualified teacher.) Perhaps most useful and interesting are the related links to numerous healing and spiritual pages. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

RxList

http://www.rxlist.com/

Are you looking for drug brand names (Advil), generic names (ibuprofen), or category names (nonsteroidal anti-flammation agent)? RxList, created by a pharmacist, offers a searchable database of some 4,000 names. Unfortunately, this is the entire site. It would be a real public service if the creator would go further and link to articles pertaining to consumer use of medications. As it is, RxList is good for comparing brand names to generic names, so you can find cheaper versions at the drugstore. There is also a page of health, medicine and pharmaceutical links that adds to RxList's value. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Cyberider Cycling WWW Site

http://blueridge.infomkt.ibm.com/bikes/

If you're into racing or off-road biking, check out Cyberider for information on bike clubs, national events, vendors, notable cyclists, trail descriptions, equipment, training, and racing tips. There's also fiction, humor, imagery, and even an elevation chart for Skyline Drive in Virginia. But wait, Web master Steve Ciccarelli has also created a list of personal bike pages from all over, and a full-text search of the entire site, which gives you detail down to the level of newsgroup posting references. Steve is clearly a biking hound, and it shows. This is a useful stop to make while you're out riding the Web. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

humanities

Bjorn Christensson Philosophers Guide

http://www-und.ida.liu.se/~y92bjoch/filosofer/philosophers.html

It's time for a game: Poke-the-Philosopher-in-the-Nose! This page features graphics of 25 European philosophers which, when poked, deliver us to short biographies of the pokees, along with several links to their works (if extant on the net). All the usual suspects are here: Kant, Hegel, Plato, *et al*. But be prepared to wait, wait, wait: Display of all 25 portraits takes several minutes, even with a fast modem. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Aristotle is just one of the 25 philosophy luminaries profiled here.

Buber's Basque Page

http://weber.u.washington.edu/~buber/basque.html

Many of us were given a choice of languages to study in high school: French, Italian, and Spanish. From this list, one would think that all European languages were similar. A visit to Buber's Basque Page puts a quick end to this assumption. The most striking thing about this site is that much of the information is in the Basque language itself. (Basque is a consonant-filled language, unrelated to Indo-European languages.) Dozens of links detail Basque games (like jai alai), as well as food and politics. There's even a link to a Basque lesbian and gay organization. Spelling, however, is spotty — though I'm sure they're spelling my language far better than I'd spell theirs. Kaixo, Lagunak! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Chorus Reviews & Resources for Real World Computing

http://www.peinet.pe.ca:2080/Chorus/home.html

Visiting the Chorus site is like walking into the party of a graduate school dean: There are dozens of conversations going on, all about wildly diverse, scholarly subjects. For that reason, it's hard to get a take on this site. Is it about computer-assisted language learning? No, but there's lots of stuff about that. Is it about Bible analysis? Software reviews? Well... no... The pages are pretty, but that teeny-tiny-italic-type-against-a-pebbled-background effect will make you go blind. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Cultronix

http://english-www.hss.cmu.edu/cultronix/

While this could just as easily fit into the publications category, as it features articles, graphics, and audio and video clips (as any high ranking e-zine might), its focus is almost exclusively within the lofty realm of humanities: philosophy, arts, and, of course, culture studies. With multi-syllable paper titles — "Wallowing in the Quagmire of Language" and "Delusional Circuitry" — Cultronix is sure to win the hearts of intellectuals worldwide. Load up this page in your local cybercafe, and you're sure to be a hit. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Deconstruction 23

http://www.igc.net/~lab23/enzo23/index~1.htm

Small. Insightful. Philosophical. Intellectual. Creative. Insightful. Small. Philosophical. Creative. Intellectual. Insightful. Small. Links and Strong Graphics. But Small and Insightful. Outstanding Layout and Organization. Deconstruction 23 is a movement of creativity and philosophical merit brought to the Web with essays, stories, links, and a nice layout. Insightful. But Small. I want more. More. MORE! —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Diotima: Women & Gender in the Ancient World

http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/gender.html

Complete with essays, bibliographies, and miles of links and images, this is an extraordinary collection of resources that should educate the Internet community about women in ancient times. There is as much local content as off-site pointers, so Diotima serves as both a source and database. Layout is well-executed, especially considering the amazing amount of content. From Semonides to Sappho, there's a lot of info here. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Eighteenth-Century Studies

http://english-www.hss.cmu.edu/18th.html

The entire English server at Carnegie Mellon University is amazing, and the 18th Century history archive is just another wonderful piece of the whole. It's slightly sad, however, that subjects of such extremely high-interest potential — Rousseau and Locke, the history of Lady Julia Manderville, and Rare Maps from Revolutionary America, to name a few — are bestowed with dull and unimpressive layouts. Does this treatment endorse the philosophy that such pristine literature and classical brilliance needs to remain far, far away from Internet technology, or does this site merely lack someone to do the HTML dirty work? —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Exploring Ancient World Cultures

http://www.evansville.edu/~wcweb/wc101/

This site's Mythology in Western Art section has a collection of ancient images.

If anybody needs exposure to world cultures, it's the people of Indiana. Just kidding. Fortunately, the University of Evansville (located in Indiana) requires first-year students to take World Culture 101, and has made it exceptionally easy for them to follow course curriculum by putting it on the Web. An unintended bonus is that we too can follow along at home. Evansville students are required to use this page, but the rest of us will want to visit just because it's so compelling. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

History of the United States of America

http://solar.rtd.utk.edu/~winslow/

Well, well, well. Another graduate student has discovered the World Wide Web, and has built a site of some of his

studies. I sure hope, though, that this isn't all that Charles Winslow has learned about U.S. history. Of the dozens of links, only three seemed to work at the time of this writing: those leading to the inaugural addresses of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe. Whoops! That's not James Monroe's address. It's Thomas Jefferson's again, incorrectly linked. It would be charitable to believe Mr. Winslow's "under construction" signs, but let's face it: The site is long dead, and it reeks like Monroe's corpse. Or is that Jefferson's? —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **F**

Humanities External Degree Catalog Index

http://dolphin.csudh.edu/~hux/huxindex.html

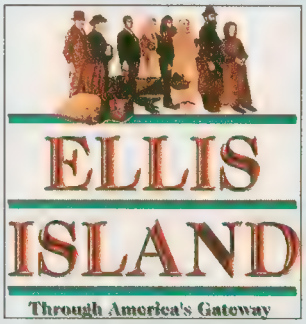
Earn a humanities Master's degree from California State University, Dominguez Hill, entirely online. At $120 per unit, students can make use of the Internet to study philosophy, art, literature, history, and music. You'll communicate with professors via e-mail, and use the Web, if you please, to receive assignments and participate in online courses. From the surface, this looks like an interesting program. Register and get started from this Web site. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

I-Channel Ellis Island

http://www.i-channel.com/ellis/index.shtml

Ellis Island: the gateway to America's gold-paved streets of opportunity. Now all those discombobulated immigrants have some online evidence to show for their tedious waits in line, sometimes 10,000-hungry, sea-sick people-thick. The Ellis Island pages in fact offer a very informative and interesting perspective of



The tired, poor, hungry masses yearning to be free who entered the U.S. via Ellis Island are remembered here.

arrivals to the "New World." There are plenty of pictures, historical accounts, and general facts to pique interest and awareness, and it's all organized fairly well. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Inda Introduction

http://www.en.com/users/ghigley/inda.html

Inventing and using imaginary languages has been a popular intellectual and artistic exercise for decades: Tolkien gave his creatures their own tongue, and "Star Trek" fans have Klinzhai. Now, Gregory Higley, a 26-year-old amateur linguist, has thrown his complex creation, Inda, into the ring. The site gives a peek into Inda constructs with sample phrases ranging all the way from "hello" to "The matter is finished. I resolved to wait no longer for the king. I would take my revenge at my leisure." Pity there's no vocabulary list. Inda is an impressive feat, deserving its place among other ersatz tongues of the universe. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Kong Zi — Confucius

http://convex.cc.uky.edu/~jatuck00/Resources/Confucius.html

"Confucius say..." Years ago, this was the introduction to many a joke on TV's "Laugh-In." But how many people have any idea of what Confucius really *did* say? Well sit yersef down, cause Jimmy Tucker, a good ol' boy from Lincoln County, Kentucky, is here to enlighten y'all. Jimmy provides a nice, short, enlightening (and 100 percent plagiarized) description of Kong Fu Zi, along with links to five of his works. It's a pity there's so little here, because it looks like an attractive beginning. —*TG*

Your education in Confucianism can start here, but that's about as far as you can go.

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Special Collections: The Siege and Commune of Paris

http://www.library.nwu.edu/spec/siege/

A revolutionary's dream come true. View 1,200 images — landscapes, portraits, political caricatures, and architecture — from the siege and commune of Paris, 1870 to 1871. The site is heavily armed with an accurate search engine, but is also "browsable" for those who aren't so certain of what they hope to find. It's a wonderful collection for any curious historian. The overall layout is dry, gray and boring, but the images of battles and burning buildings certainly make up for an otherwise dreary blandness. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Stephen Loughlin's HomePage — Aquinas

http://www.epas.utoronto.ca:8080/~loughlin/index.html

Stephen Loughlin, a doctoral candidate in medieval philosophy at the University of Toronto, obviously has a love for his field of study. In particular, he has a thing for Saint Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican theologian of the 13th century.

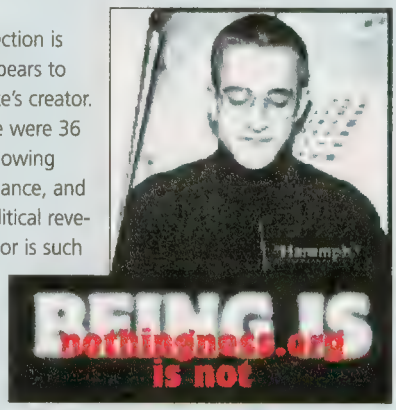
CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

Nothingness.org

http://www.nothingness.org/

Nothing is something. Nothingness.org, ironically, is rife with interesting material, yielding thought-provoking intensity on every page. It's brilliantly composed in concept, layout and content. Near and dear to my own heart, Nothingness.org will provide entertaining, informative, and intelligent ideas for a diverse range of people. It is a renaissance of art, politics, design, history, and ubiquitous Web paraphernalia (links, resources, etc.).

The site's creator presents a perspective of social anarchism, highlighting institutions that have continuously flowed through free thought's wake: Dadaism, Situationism, and other various sociopolitical movements. Each section accurately and cogently outlines itself. For example, the Situationist Archive page opens up with a search engine and a detailed, well-organized list of everything contained in the area: text, journals, biographies of key figures Guy Debord and Raol Vaneigem, and lists of related resources. All the articles include bylines and dates, so it's easy to find material by your favorite thinkers. Kudos to the site's creators for offering this information. Nothingness.org also offers a French language option. This should help to search information on the Situationists, whose movement exploded in France.



By far, my favorite section is the poetry area, which appears to be written solely by the site's creator. When I last counted, there were 36 of these creations, some flowing with rhythmic, seductive dance, and others shouting jarring political revelations. It's fitting the author is such a wonderful writer. Check out his reading list, which is hyperlinked to many of the full texts. (It's masked as "word" in the open-book icon on the front page.) In an e-mail interview, the creator, who goes by the name Spud, wrote: "I have always advocated copyright-free texts, the dissemination of information, and the virtues of mostly unknown political and art movements.

The Do It Yourself attitude of punk rock is the cornerstone of Nothingness.org, and the walls are made of all the paper I have time to build with." And build he does, as a freelance graphic designer for his own company, Dada Typographics; as a moderator of the Graphics mail list; as a 9-to-5 day job drone; and as a Web site maintainer. Given all these distractions, Nothingness.org is an accomplishment. This site displays a genuine "commitment to cause," and everything linked here, displayed here, and sporting the Nothingness.org domain is part of a unified perspective. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Loughlin's home page for the saint — who says you have to be alive to have a home page? — features a short bio and all the scholarly stuff you'd expect from a doctoral candidate, such as a bibliography and a guide to his research. The tech level is low, but who needs tech when you've got love? —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Darmok Dictionary

http://www.wavefront.com/~raphael/darmok/darmok.html

I can understand a life dedicated to studying the subtleties of the "Star Trek" universe. But to a single episode? That's the premise behind the Darmok

Go here to learn Tamarian phrases from the" Star Trek: The Next Generation" episode, "Darmok."

Dictionary, an exegesis of the allegorical language used in the brilliant "Next Generation" episode, "Darmok." The site's author picks apart linguistics with the assiduousness of a doctoral candidate, using sound clips, references to other episodes, storytelling techniques, Asian languages, and comments posted in the Fidonet Trek forum. There's really not much to this site besides text, but it engaged me from beginning to end. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The International Philosophical Preprint Exchange

http://phil-preprints.L.chiba-u.ac.jp/IPPE.html

As far as I can tell, this started as an admirable archiving project for philosophy studies in progress. But it seems the project ran out of steam: You'll find journals and articles galore from 1993 and 1994, though very few from 1995 and later. Information is presented in eye-popping ugliness — graphics too big for your screen and text too small to read (if formatted at all). Worth a stop if you're a serious academic, but better references are available elsewhere. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

World History to 1500

http://www.byuh.edu/coursework/hist201/

If this Web site is a faithful representative of class curriculum, then David Grandy's "World History to 1500" college course is a full but uneven hodgepodge of facts and opinions. The site is almost entirely composed of links — and lots of 'em! — to external documents, sans commentary or guidance. For his students at Brigham Young University, that's fine, as they have Mr. Grandy in the flesh to shepherd them from source to source. For the rest of us, however, there's only wandering and wondering, wandering and wondering. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

lifestyle

Alternative-X

http://www.altx.com/althome2.html

Feeling postmodern? Then slouch toward Alternative-X, a zine that's so cool, hot button links are unmarked and open to personal interpretation. The Interzones section contains articles with titles like "Weird Republicans" and "Why Clinton's Foreign Policy Shows He's Good in Bed." You'll find rants and reviews, fiction and fantasy. Lots of attitude. Scores of short articles and features. Published by a Mark Amerika, the staff also includes an Anarchivist and someone in charge of Covert Operations. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

BISEX.ORG

http://www.bisex.org/

Does the Internet foster community? The people from BISEX.ORG would say yes. They have created not only a page, but also an organization for friends and supporters of #bisex IRC. The whys and wherefores of bisexuality are covered in a welcoming essay called "A Bit of History." Unfortunately, the rest of the site is a bit bare — even the ubiquitous

Despite a good history section, this site is a bit bare of other content.

FAQ is missing. When there's better organization, and more Q&A about bisexuality, personal views and so on, this could be a useful page. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

MainFloor

http://www.mainfloor.com/

"Glamor and good advice" are yours from the MainFloor, an online beauty and style magazine. Nicely designed, the site features fashion notes (with small runway photos in which you can't see detail), fragrance reports, profiles of models, and tips on grooming and makeup. Everyone's favorite, the beauty makeover, has its own area, with lots of cosmetic technique and description. The Main Floor has made a good start and has room to grow. Just consider how many people appreciate advice like, "Invest in natural bristles. For powder or blush, look for squirrel bristles. For eyeshadow, pony." —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Outdoors OnLine

http://www.wsa.com/ool/ool1home.html

Hunters, gatherers, anglers, hikers, and trail guides alike may enjoy Outdoors Online, which is a part mall, part newsletter and part directory of organizations concerned with enjoying the great outdoors. The folksy tone and cheerful look should be just the ticket for those who want to read about The Walleye Guys, or enter a contest for a Dream Hunt. The site needs more links, product information, and editorial content, but this is a pleasant and well-intentioned beginning. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Rainbow Family of Living Light

http://www.welcomehome.org/rainbow.html

Since 1972, a summertime Rainbow Gathering has overtaken the great outdoors. Consider it a giant camp-out for thousands of hippies, Deadheads, and other cosmic spirits. This confab of music, grooving, and consensus sans authority figures is an experiment in cooperative living, and this non-official page by Rob Savoye is a good insider's view of the Rainbow phenomenon. You'll find media clips, event calendars, photos of recent gatherings, and even a glossary. Whether you want to join the family or are just fascinated by this particular microcosm, you'll find something of interest here. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

literature

Anne Rice and The Memnoch Ball

http://www.webcom.com/lchamber/ar.html

I find few things more upsetting than crystal-rubbing sprites spouting off about the coming Millennial shift. Come to think of it, only vampire wannabes annoy me more, and we have Anne Rice to blame for the gothic revival we're witnessing. There is an enormous amount of Rice-related paraphernalia online, and heaps of it can be reached from this site. Images, related links, instructions on making custom fangs — you'll find it all here. Spooky types will love this site; pay particular attention to the transcript of Anne Rice's answering machine greeting. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Bill Gates: The Road Ahead

http://www.roadahead.com/

Assume Bill Gates owns half of everything worth owning. If every second he purchased half of everything he *doesn't* already own, how long will it be until we're all working for Microsoft? This is a fine-looking site put together by top-notch Web artists. But tell me: Is there really a need for an entire site devoted to *The Road Ahead*, Bill's book? And, even if the book merits a site, does it really deserve its own domain name? This is one of the greatest privileges of wealth: People think you actually have something worth saying. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Bukowski

http://realbeer.com/buk/

You'll find them in every college town: no-talent twentysomething slackers drinking beer and telling stories about girlfriends they never had, quietly trying to play out a Bukowski story they once may have read. Admittedly, some Bukowski can be amusing. Visitors to this site will find a few pieces of Bukowski art, some sound files, a brief

This is a pleasant little site about a hard-drinking vagabond writer.

bio, and the various other items one typically finds at a small fan site. Pleasant enough, but this is certainly not the definitive Buk space. Interested parties should try a net search. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Haiku for People

http://www.oslonett.no/home/keitoy/haiku.html

You'll find answers to various haiku-related questions, and plenty of haikus by famous and not-so-famous poets. Nothing more. But that's O.K. The poems are wonderful (for haiku aficionados, at least) and the "How" and "What" sections are informative, and should be useful for would-be haiku writers. The site is simple and to-the-point, accomplishing its intended goals. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Hunter S. Thompson

http://www.empirenet.com/~rdaeley/authors/thompson.html

I sometimes puzzle over that age-old question: Is a self-destructive lifestyle an essential part of genius? Case in point: Hunter S. Thompson. Few would argue the brilliance of his political journalism. And few would want to embrace the fundamentally unhealthful lifestyle he has pursued for decades, if reports are to be believed. Another mundane fan site, this has little original material sitting here. Of greatest interest to Thompson fans will be the related links, which feature images, reviews, and more. A useful point to jump into the Web, but don't expect to spend a great deal of time parked here. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

John Keats 1795-1821

http://portico.bl.uk/exhibitions/keats/overview.html

This site is served by Portico, the British Library's online information server. One might expect it to be a vast clearing-house of Keats-related information. If these were your expectations, you would be mistaken. Visitors will find a brief biography of the poet, a few digitized images of early manuscripts, and little else. The available material is well-presented, but a Keats researcher will be disappointed by the paltry selection. The especially troubled might enjoy the audio file of Sally Brown's reading of "When I have fears that I may cease to be." —*SS*

Though apprenticed to a surgeon, John Keats is remembered for his poetry.

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Kathy Acker Hoam Paige

http://www.uidaho.edu/~dodg9102/acker.html

I had never encountered the work of Kathy Acker prior to this page. This may be a good thing — my fragile psyche is still in pieces over the way "Cheers" ended. This site offers extensive selections from Acker's work, in addition to news, reviews, and related links. The organization and presentation in no way dampen the intensity of the writing here. The word "postmodern" appears numerous times in this space, and this definitely works for me for if "postmodern" can be considered synonymous with "mad as hell." Overall, a collection of disturbing and pointed writings that no doubt have quite a following. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

kids lit

http://mgfx.com/kidlit/

"Designed for kids and adults interested in quality kids literature." Buy books, submit art and stories, read letters to Santa — a little dated, indeed— sign a guest book, and submit your personal comments. This site features all the typical Web amenities, and is a great space to share with the wee ones. It could use a little layout help, but overall, it's on the up. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Literary HyperCalendar

http://www.yasuda-u.ac.jp/LitCalendar.html

December 12, 1889: Robert Browning dies in Venice. January 4, 1960: Albert Camus dies in a car crash. See the connection? Perhaps this site will help. Here we have a hyperlinked literary calendar with a few pieces of literati trivia for each calendar day. This site reminds me of those kooky-themed desktop calendars that were so popular a few years back: a wacky Winston Churchill anecdote for each day of the year. And so forth. The site creator appears quite interested in user feedback; always a good sign. As more bits of trivia augment the database, the site will grow more interesting. —*SS*

Click on any day in the calendar, and you'll discover literary trivia.

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Shakespeare Illustrated

http://www.cc.emory.edu/ENGLISH/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html

I must admit that I began composing this review as soon as I saw the site's title. "How nice," I thought, "Shakespeare's plays... with pretty pictures." It turns out the site is nothing of the sort. Instead, what one finds are digitized images of paintings related to the various plays. The images look good;

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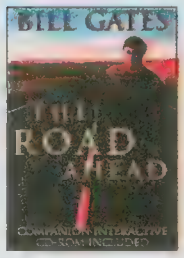
net SITE OF THE MONTH APRIL 1996

BookWire

http://www.bookwire.com/

BookWire captivates with interesting, insightful, and intelligent commentary on nearly everything related to the publishing industry. I could easily spend hours at this site, each and every week. There's a seemingly excessive amount of material here, though none of it is gratuitous. BookWire simply has a huge agenda — and tackles it well. Point your browser, put on your reading glasses, and prepare for volumes of content.

At times, organization seems a bit lacking, but how could we expect otherwise? There is more content included in this one domain, Bookwire.com, than on the sites of several major publishing houses combined. Teaming up with *Boston Book Review*, BookWire sponsors dozens and dozens of new reviews each month spanning topics as diverse as fiction, poetry, technology, and social commentary. And *Publishers Weekly* supplies the site with weekly best sellers lists, and special features like the "Best of 95."



For those who *aren't* interested in the latest Stephen King thriller, Danielle Steele romance novel, or Bill Gates' new personal literary tangent, BookWire accommodates with "The Hungry Mind Review," a must for independent publishing fans. Each quarter, the Hungry Mind addresses a specific theme. In winter 1995, the theme was Science and Faith. Hungry Mind also sponsors a Web-only section titled "Hot Off the Press," which contains dozens of reviews that don't necessarily fall into the specific theme category. The reviews are brilliantly constructed criticisms, and fine literature in and of themselves.

In addition to all this, BookWire houses the Web site for *The Quarterly Black Review* (QBR). Though this area was still under serious construction when I last checked, it did offer a wonderful interview with writer Terry McMillan on the screen adaptation of her novel *Waiting To Exhale*. QBR also offers a list of "Black Classic" authors. Clicking on Maya Angelou links you to a bibliography on her work. Unfortunately, there is no additional information about either the author or the texts, but it's a good start. Finally, the "BookWire's Best Bets" area is a wonderful link list of book-related resources. Unlike other book resource lists, this one has a heavy emphasis on children, paying special attention to young writers, as well as adults writing for young people. There's also a separate section of the site completely devoted to the publishing industry. The entire area is searchable.

BookWire is an outstanding accomplishment, and should pique the interest of book lovers and the publishing industry. Fantastic. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

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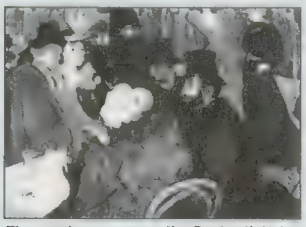
care was taken in their translation. This is most definitely a work in progress. though we can hope that time will nurture a growing collection of images to be browsed. Both art types and Shakespeare fans would enjoy this site, yet still rue its small size. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Beat Generation

http://www.charm.net/~brooklyn/topics/BeatGen.html

As a documentary site, it's fine — other than a few presumptuous declarations, like "Walt Whitman, The Original Beat," or, in reference to Columbia University, "This grand old Ivy League university may not even want to be the birthplace



The creator compares the Beat artists to the French Impressionists.

of the Beat Generation." (Come on, Columbia is as liberal as Ivy gets). This aside, the pages offer biographies and pictures of Beat heroes, presenting an informed and sensible historical perspective. It's slightly dry, which is unfortunate, as it emphasizes such creative writers. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Consummate Hitchhiker's Guide

http://conan.ids.net/~nedry/42.html

Here you'll find extensive information on Douglas Adams and the ever-growing *Hitchhikers Guide to the Universe* cybercult. This is quite a database of related resources. But be warned, young travelers, the collection is merely a stockpile of hyperlinks, most of which flash the yellow "new" starburst logo; no original content here. Links are poorly organized, and the layout is distasteful. But it's still a comprehensive list for those who want to skip the likes of Yahoo! and Lycos. –*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The Sherlockian Connection

http://www.bcpl.lib.md.us/~lmoskowi/holmes.html

Any mention of Sherlock Holmes brings a wry smile to my face. Such nice stories, and the Holmes fans I've met are all such nice people. No surprise that they should at last turn up on the Web. Here, you'll find a standard fan site with links to Holmes-themed external pages, and a "What's Happening" area for fans in Baltimore. There is also a great deal of information here about an e-mail list for the faithful. Pleasant, nothing exceptional, much like the stories themselves. Holmes enthusiasts will feel at home. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

music

Blue Plate Special

http://www.pinsight.com:80/~chasmo/index.html

Lounge music is back — and possibly already out if you're an avante-hipster. According to the site's creators, Blue Plate Special is "a jump and swing band from a cowtown you've probably never heard of." I hadn't heard of the band either, but that didn't stop me from enjoying the Bachelor Pad Music clips found on the site. This place is one long promotional, but is punctuated with retro graphics and a witty bio. A "Recommended Listening" page offers detailed liner notes, and mentions many albums, making it a good reference for anyone looking to swing. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Ceolas Celtic Music Archive

http://celtic.stanford.edu/ceolas.html

While it doesn't *look* particularly inspiring, The Celtic Music Archive certainly delivers content. You'll find everything here from song lyrics and artists to basic information about instruments used in Celtic music. There's also a semi-current listing of Celtic-related events and concerts organized by geography and by performer. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Everything But the Girl

http://www.ebtg.com/

Everything But the Girl is a post-punk duo that's been performing since the early 80s. To navigate this site, you click on different backstage passes for entrance to various areas. While this makes for a unique design, it's difficult to determine what the "All-Access" area offers (answer: band bios). There's tons of information about the band here, too: in-depth bios, songbooks, photos, tour dates, etc. There's even a section I've never seen on any other fan site: a page fetishizing musical instruments, complete with pictures. It's only *slightly* creepy. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Geffen DGC Home Page

http://www.geffen.com/

Aren't you dying for record company information on various Geffen artists like Lisa Loeb, Sonic Youth, and Urge Overkill? Each artist's area offers a waylong "official" biography, a discography, fan club info, pictures, sound files, and video clips. These pages are well-designed with nice graphics that look good despite their small size. However, no matter how good the site looks, it's still corporate propaganda. The true masochist can even download the "official" Geffen newsletter in the oh-so-convenient PDF format — not like they have the money to translate it to HTML. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Global Electronic Music Marketplace

http://192.215.234.100/Flirt/GEMM/gemmlean.c.html

The Global Electronic Music Marketplace (GEMM) is a good idea that still needs some work on the development side. When you connect to the home page, you're presented with a form on which you type an artist or band name. When you submit the form, the GEMM server searches its database for related keywords, looking for sale items and related Internet resources. It works... sort of. Many searches of established artists turned up nothing. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Mazzy Star Spectacle

http://www.unc.edu/~hondo/mazzy.html

At first, the Mazzy Star Spectacle isn't much to behold. The colorful design is dominated by a huge, washed-out image map of singer Hope Sandoval. If

The sultry gaze of Mazzy Star singer Hope Sandoval dominates this fan site.

half the size, Hope's image would still take forever to download. Then there's song lyrics, a discography, a reprinted interview from *Rolling Stone*, and audio clips. The best area, by far, is the photo page. These expandable GIF thumbnails feature Hope in all her attractive glory. The site's creator even posted a photo of her with him — and I'm not jealous at all. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Michael Nyman

http://www.netpoint.be/abc/music/nyman/

Who is Michael Nyman? As a film composer, he scored soundtracks for Peter Greenaway's films (*The Draughtman's Contract, Drowning by Numbers, A Zed and Two Naughts, The Cook, The Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover*). However, fans will tell you that he's a talented performer and musician in his own right. Follow his discography. Read his composer's notes. Check out his CD covers. Leave messages for other fans. Be mesmerized by the many photographs of his balding pate. This page looks classier and is better organized than most music fan sites. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Nutra World's Spudland

http://www.nfinity.com/~nutra/spudland.html

When MTV began broadcasting, its only good videos came from a single group: DEVO. Now, even though this new wave institution has disbanded, its presence still haunts pop. As you enter Spudland, a background filled with energy domes (those flower pot hats) protects you from evil. Now, you can look at video stills mysteriously arranged to form some sort of indecipherable story. Read weird DEVOnian writings from the back of a bootleg album. Feed your DEVO fix with cheap, post-industrial garbage. This site could have weightier content. It could have flashier design. It could be weirder. But it's DEVO. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Alanis Web

http://www.pernet.net/~rbarrow1/alanis.htm

Alanis Morissette's career began long ago — she was the little girl who had slime poured on her head on "You Can't Do That On Television." Now that show manages these fan pages. You'll find her very deep lyrics, a voluminous discography, and an epic bio detailing her long show-biz resumé. And what fan page would be complete without tear-jerking testimonials from obsessive fans? Now, get ready for the best feature of the site: You can slime a younger, but still-annoying, Alanis herself. Way cool. Just push a button. Too bad she doesn't let them do this to her on MTV. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Mighty Mighty Homepage

http://www.reptech.com/bosstones/

Dedicated to the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, this site features the usual reviews and tour dates. There's also a well-organized discography that features cover art, lyrics, and sound files. The fan confessions I read weren't that rabid, though they were revealing. People either complained about skinheads ruining shows, or reminisced about how cool the band was when it played at local schools. All in all, a useful resource for fans, albeit slightly uninspiring. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Punk Page

http://www.exclamation.com/webtrax/punk/

The Punk Page is a simple, easy-to-use resource cataloging Punk stuff on the Internet. It's not much to look at, but it organizes a gaggle of content: old-

Find info on new- and old-school Punk bands, and add your own links.

school bands, new-school bands, punk record labels' home pages, skater stuff, and punk-themed links. It's a good tool, especially for discovering bands and zines. Makes you feel like piercing your nether regions with a snowboard. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

They Might Be Giants

http://www.dnai.com/~obo/tmbg/

They Might Be Giants (TMBG) is a certifiably weird band. While this site doesn't quite capture the group's oddness, it

They might be John Flansburgh and John Linnell; together, they create rock music.

does offer cool fan resources: news updates, tour info, links to lyrics, FAQ, FTP archives, and a link to a MUSH that's partly modeled on TMBG product. The best part is Dial-A-Song Online. For the last 10 years, the band put a recording of demos, new songs, and assorted weirdness on a regular phone line that you could call for free in the New York City area. While it's less costly to get this from the Web, it does take longer. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Welcome to the Rykoverse

http://www.rykodisc.com/

Rykodisc, a specialty label, is known for its Zappa and Bowie reissues, and even a few new acts, like Sugar and Morphine. In fact, if it's rock, reggae, rap, funk, folk, jazz, or world music, Rykodisc releases it. On this site, each Ryko artist has an area, with the usual corporate info and links to other resources. You'll also find cool stuff, like Zappa screensavers and special CD offers. It's surprising, though, that a technologically adept company that supports CDLink and CD Plus has such a lame site. Other than nifty screensaver files, content and design is plain. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

pastimes

Antiques

http://www.ic.mankato.mn.us/antiques/Antiques.html

Enjoy this course in Antiques 101, with nary a sales pitch in sight. This good-looking site offers basic information with pictures on various categories of antiques and collectibles: advertising items, toys, etc. A page of guidelines for choosing and negotiating with a dealer provides great advice, even for experienced collectors. The site is sponsored by Antiques Oronoco, but it doesn't trumpet its presence. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Atlas Model Railway Company

http://www.atlasrr.com/atlasrr

This mostly commercial site begins by stating that model railroading is "the fastest-growing hobby in America." Funny, I thought Web page creation had this distinction. This page reminded me of grammar school film strips: There's some good information, yes, but a lot of product placement, too. (Perhaps you also saw the film on basketball basics that had the team drinking Coke at half time. But I digress.) Atlas products are all over the place. And why not? This is the Atlas site. Overall, an attractive layout. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Bob Lafleur's Square Dancing Resource List

http://pages.map.com/~bobl/sdance.htm

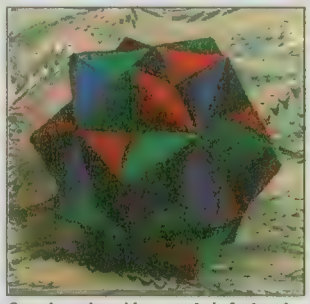
Lists of square dance dealers, organizations, callers, cuers, clubs and Web sites. Even though the site is still under construction, there's good information to be found, no matter what part of the country you're in. Or the world, for that matter — there's a link to the Belgium Square Dancing Organization. Who knew? — *RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Bob's Origami Page

http://www.newtech.net/webwerks/origami.html

People who are seriously into origami



Complex origami by experts is featured at this site.

don't fold paper airplanes, they fold space shuttles. You can see a photo of this and other equally impressive creations, such as an arrow-pierced heart, in a small gallery. Unfortunately, this site is not as inspired as its subject matter, and Bob's best contribution is linking up to other origami sites. Bob outlines his plans for what he intends to do in the future, so in a couple of months, this space may be worth a gander. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

Cook's Corner

http://wchat.on.ca/merlene/cook.htm

The brainchild of a self-confessed online addict named Merlene, Cook's Corner is a charmless misadventure in Web page execution and maintenance. The idea is fine: a resource list of links to tasty sites like the Virtual Campsite Cookbook, The Ottawa Coffee Co., and Virtual Vineyards — good links, all of 'em. The ones that *aren't* out of date, that is. Still, you've gotta appreciate Merlene's chutzpah or, more accurately, quaint lack of self-awareness. As she proudly declares of this aesthetic mishap, "the background and ALL images on this page are the original designs of Merlene." —*LG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

interBirdNet

http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/square/gf09/index.html

Ask me how England's auks are doing, and I can tell you, "It's been a good month for Little Auks along Britain's North East Coast." I know because I checked out interBirdNet, a resource for bird sightings in the United Kingdom. All sorts of nifty avian info is here: a Red-Neck Grebe was sighted at Cavendish Dock Barrow in Furness. Splendid, just splendid. Technically and aesthetically, this site comes up short, but if you scope birds on the Isles, this is your hangout. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Italian Motor Scooters

http://www.vespa.com/

All about Italian motor scooters. Well, not everything. Content is thin, and considering you must have at least a *minor* jones for Vespas to create something like this, pretty tepid as well. A page of vehicle identification numbers is a baffling jumble of data. There's the

There are lots of GIFs here, but the data could have been organized better.

requisite links to other scooter sites, but overall navigation is clunky. If you saw *Quadraphenia* more than twice, you may find something to get your motor running. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Juggling Information Service

http://www.hal.com/services/juggle/

I used to juggle, and can tell you that jugglers are a fixated and focused bunch of humans. This site reflects this obsession, claiming it is "connecting all juggling related resources." I believe it. Colorful ball and club icons shoot you to areas such as festival listings, meetings, a shopping mall from which to order equipment, movie clips, and worldwide juggling magazines, such as New Zealand's *Flying Kiwi*. If it has to do with throwing objects without dropping them, it's here. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Pegasus Home Page

http://www.pegasusor.com/

This is an extensive gallery of designs for stitchers, needlepointers, quilters, soft sculpture makers, and other hobbyists who work with needle and thread. You'll find dozens of easy-to-search categories, including cats, cottages, continents, and, my favorite, Federal Duck Stamps. The friendly folks at Pegasus don't sell products over the Internet, but they will send special orders to a nearby store if you e-mail a request. Rumor has it that the conceptual landscape artist Christo started his career with a needlepoint kit, so get stitching. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Stahl's Pottery

http://www.ot.com/ht/stahls/

This site is visually impressive, but lacks depth. If you poke around at length, you'll find your mind starting to wander. A brief history of the Stahl

Though visually compelling, Stahl's Pottery puzzles one with its mysterious links to seemingly unrelated topics.

family line of pottery leaves you with more questions than answers. So does the rest of the page, with its mysterious links to seemingly unrelated topics — shops that don't feature Stahl pottery, for example. All in all, this is an example of failed online communication. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Team.Net Vintage Race Web

http://www.team.net/www/vintage-race/

Endure the staid checkered flags that limply wave you into each page at the Team.Net Vintage Race Web 'cause you're in for a great meat-and-potatoes site. Gobs of dense (and useful) text are packed onto every page — enough to impress even the most hardened vintage racing fanatic. Although the site's just a step above the Team.Net FTP server itself, as it humbly claims to be a "shared resource for vintage racers on the net," you can't fault it for pretense. The word "expansive" came to mind as I flipped through page after page of club lists, parts sources, and technical articles. —*LG*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

The Original Motor Scooter Home Page

http://weber.u.washington.edu/~shortwav/

This decidedly high-brow scooter site is chock-full of exceptional vintage images of June Cleaveresque babes draped over Vespas, Lambrettas, Cushmans, and

This photo from 1965 is one of the many images of women and vintage scooters adorning this site.

NSUs. Scooterists hip to the politics of pedigree will groove on the electronic exploration of a two-wheeled culture that took off some 50 years ago, when Enrico Piaggio sold his first Vespa. Whether you're looking to join the Festering OktoberScoot Rally, or interested in tips and hints to restore your own machine, this is a good site for connoisseurs of these unique 'n' glam machines. —*LG*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

The Toy Train Company & Reference Value Guides

http://mountain.net/ttc/index.html

Lenny the Lion, dressed in an engineer's outfit, greets surfers at the top of the page. American Flyer, Ives, K-Line, Lionel, and Marx products are listed in detail (Lionel sponsors the page, and thoughtfully provides a company history). This is strictly a pricing reference for model train stuff, so there are no handy tips on how to get that Styrofoam rock to stay in place. A good site if you need product info, though it provides limited interest if you're not in the market. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* ***C***

Washington DC Swing Dance Server

http://catalog.com/meyer/swing.html

Here we have an extensive list of swing dance classes, clubs, instructors, weekly events, and more, accompanied by photos of happy residents of our nation's Capitol cutting a rug. Information

Swing Dance fever seems to have engulfed a good section of the Capitol.

should appeal to everyone from beginners to "Strictly Ballroom" types into serious competition. I can't imagine that anything to do with swing dancing in the D.C. area has been left out. Obviously, the usefulness of this page decreases the further away you are from D.C., but if geography is on your side, it's definitely a useful resource. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

politics

Dole Watch

http://users.aol.com/dolewatch1/private/page1.htm

As the Presidential election approaches, those with an active interest in the contest will be looking for ammunition to support their man. This page offers plenty of irreverent firepower for the anti-Bob Dole camp. In fact, anybody interested in Dole, liberal or conservative, would probably find this site interesting. There is not a huge amount of material here, but I suspect the site will grow rapidly as the Presidential race heats up. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* ***B***

Earth First! Journal

http://envirolink.org/orgs/ef/

I imagine the Internet presents Earth First! with quite a dilemma. The environmental group's Luddite members probably have a hard time with their online presence. Then again, the Web does offer certain advantages over traditional means of communication, especially for a group with such a strong do-it-yourself philosophy. Perhaps the group compromised by posting the Earth First! journal in a text-only format — much better than reading it on dead trees. If you're into radical environmentalism EF! style, the site is probably worth a read. It may not hold much appeal for others. —*BB*

Earth First! has chosen to pursue a text-only format, which should please its more Luddite members.

net rating: *overall:* ***C***

Electronic Town Hall Project

http://www.emf.net/~cr/eth.html

The Electronic Town Hall Project is an Internet Relay Chat channel devoted to discussing the agenda of United We Stand America, the populist group led by Ross Perot that is trying to establish a third political party. This site intends to introduce newcomers to IRC in general, and the project specifically. You'll find links to IRC-related articles, transcripts of Town Hall sessions, and info on Town Hall participants. If you're interested in these topics, you'll find this site to be a trove of information. However, it is not well-organized, and you won't find any fancy graphics. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* ***B+***

National Party

http://www.geopages.com/CapitolHill/1889/

The National Party: It *sounds* innocuous

Politics USA

http://www.politicsusa.com/

net SITE OF THE MONTH APRIL 1996

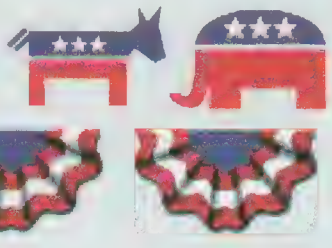
Excitement grows as the 1996 Presidential campaign gathers momentum. The various twists and turns that plague competitors along the campaign trail have already claimed a few casualties. Wishy-washy California Governor Pete Wilson dropped out early. General Colin Powell tentatively probed his electoral viability, then decided not to even get into the race. Still, a full field of mostly elderly white males persists, striking ridiculous poses to capture the hearts and minds of the body politic. The question is: Where you will take your seat to observe the Great American Spectacle? Newspapers, TV news, radio, and magazines all have their various well-established box seats. And you can bet the Internet, the new media kid on the block, has some pretty cush skyboxes, too.

PoliticsUSA
Welcome to PoliticsUSA, the premier Web site for political news, resources and involvement. Check out what's new on PoliticsUSA today

PoliticsUSA is an online resource that intends to offer complete coverage of politics in America. It transcends simple reporting, and leverages the interactivity of the Web to provide public resources unavailable via other mediums. Steve Hull, president and CEO of PoliticsUSA, says the Internet is the "most important development in politics since the coming of television," adding that "ultimately, it could be even more important." Hull wants PoliticsUSA to be the premier place where people express opinions, communicate with candidates, contribute to public polls, and receive up-to-the-minute campaign information. Perhaps if PoliticsUSA positions itself correctly, voting in the 21st century will be as simple as pointing your browser to the left or right.

The news on the site is extensive and professionally presented. A section on big issues provides a quick device for help in finding out a candidate's position, and a list of schedules will give you fair warning on when your town may be visited by a campaigning contender. Once the primaries kick in gear, expect this site buzz. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* ***A+***



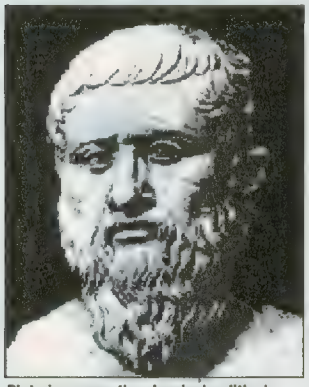
enough. But sometimes letter bombs come in plain brown wrappers. Dig the mission statement: "The National Party is a political and social organization which actively represents, protects and advances the interests of White people in America. It is committed to being the foremost driving force for White separatism..." Bigoted venom aside, this graphically barren site is well-written, easily navigated, and concise. Tell all your racist friends! —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Political Theory on the Internet

http://swift.eng.ox.ac.uk/jdr/index.html

This site is a collection of links to the major contributions of big-name political theorists. For each of the dozen or so theorists listed, you'll find a portrait, a



Plato is among the classical political theorists featured on this site.

discussion of the theorist's life and major ideas, and links to original works. There is also a page of links to political theory resources. While this site lacks extensive content, those with an interest in political theory may find this to be a great clearinghouse for information, especially since you'll find complete texts, not just excerpts. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **A-**

Reform Party of Canada

http://www.reform.ca/

This site presents a comprehensive, compelling argument for a unified Canada, and last year asked readers to cast "no"

Canada's Reform Party is reaching out to potential supporters via the Web.

votes during the referendum on sovereignty for Quebec. As you may or may not know, Unionists squeaked by with a 1 percent margin. My friends and I were crushed. We applauded the sheer weirdness of the insurrection, and were looking forward to knowing very little about not one, but two, northern neighbors. Links are available in both English and French — perhaps a concession to woo back the disenfranchised. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Turn Left

http://www.cjnetworks.com/~cubsfan/liberal.html

"Liberal" is a term that's bandied about a lot nowadays, but few know what it means. This site addresses this shortcoming by providing a solid introduction to Liberalism. The site also offers a large number of links to Democratic Party

Politics "is the oil which lubricates the machinery of our nation (and sometimes spills and makes a mess of it," this site opines.

organizations and hundreds of other groups that set liberal philosophies to action. I can only criticize the message wall section: It desperately needs a decent visual interface, and is aesthetically boring. —*BB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Upstream

http://www.mosaic.co.za/gavan/Upstream/

Based in Cape Town, South Africa, Upstream is "home for the intellectually heterodox, the politically incorrect, and other independent thinkers." It's also a thorough compendium of scholarly, far-right-wing philosophy. A search utility eases travel, and you can opt to receive automatic e-mail alerting you to site updates. Though a lot of the material centers on South Africa, Upstream is nonetheless a requisite stop for rabid social Darwinists and the people who keep them in check. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Votelink

http://www.votelink.com/

Sooner or later, it was bound to happen: Someone would develop a dedicated polling site for the Web. This site gives you the chance to vote on select issues of the day. How do *you* feel about primary elections in Arizona? What about the demise of "Calvin and Hobbes"? You can view voting results, as well as read and post comments. I found the interface quite confusing. —*BB*

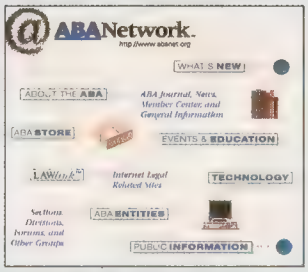
net rating: *overall:* **C**

professional resources

American Bar Association

http://www.abanet.org/

With 370,000 members and a $100 mil-



The ABA's site has a wealth of info, including links to net-based law sites.

lion annual budget, the American Bar Association is a major player in the world of professional associations. It is the national voice of U.S. attorneys, and its page reflects its mission to offer scores of programs, forums, publications, and meetings relating to legal education, public policy, and professional advocacy. The home page offers links to member information, news, Lawlink (an excellent page of federal, state, local, and Internet legal info), and various association activities. For a law site, the amount of text doesn't overwhelm, and graphics and links are serviceable. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

BMI.com

http://bmi.com/

If you're a songwriter by trade, you already know about BMI, a non-profit organization representing more than 160,000 songwriters, composers, and music publishers. BMI controls the rights to some 3 million titles, collects royalties, and grants permission for use. If you're a music lover, the BMI page is a terrific place to check on lyrics, composers, and song titles. You can also get the latest on how to work with BMI for permission to license its property. The What's New page provides new royalty agreements, announcements about awards, and links to other professional music sites. Cool beans. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Industrial Designers' Society of America: Chicago Chapter

http://www.idsa.org/

Industrial designers are the folks who make everyday products more functional

Spare yet elegant icons adorn this industrial designer-oriented site.

and, often, more beautiful. The IDSA is the organization that fulfills some of their professional needs. IDSA Chicago members are early out the gate with their own Web page (there seems to be no national online resource), but their site is content-light, offering nice, clean lines, but not enough news, listings, or cross references to make it very useful. A monthly print newsletter would do a better job. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

National Writers Union

http://www.nwu.org./nwu/

A grassroots organization, the National Writers Union (NWU) is open to those who have published, or are attempting to publish, books, short stories, poems, plays, newsletters, publicity material, and so on. The union is based in New York City, and has chapters around the country that develop policies about legal agreements and publishing rights for writers. NWU has been studying electronic and online publishing, and here you'll find texts of two position papers on the subjects. But that's about all that's here, save a membership form.

This site needs more content in order for writers to feel compelled to return.

NWU could be a very rich resource for writers, with lots of research, policies, and educational information. Until that happy day, the NWU page is not useful or compelling enough. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Seamless Website Law and Legal Resources

http://seamless.com/

The name says it all. Seamless is seamless, and a joy to navigate. This site could easily become a significant online resource for legal issues. It has an excellent organizational structure that's bound to grow. Main areas include Chambers (announcements, new developments, updates); Commons (a Webchat-based discussion area); Shingle (attorney and legal service advertising); and Crossroads (pointers to other legal sites). Go here to make contacts, post resumés, list job openings, and locate resources by subject area (i.e., cyberspace, malpractice, and consumer law). Worth a bookmark for legal eagles. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

publications

21st Century Magazine

http://www.webspace.com/~century/index.htm

This bimonthly online magazine focuses on the question, What will be happening in the 21st century? While the site's treatment sounds New Agey, the few, short articles posted here when I visited were all about how genetic engineering will improve our lives in the future. The graphics were ugly, though, and I found myself longing for the simplicity of unenhanced gray tones. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **D+**

Cyberwest Magazine

http://www.netway.net/cyberwest/

Saddle up and head out for Cyberwest Magazine. Tap into the spiritual energy of Sedona in Arizona, or visit the Great

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

Cowboys and desert afficionados alike will find much to enjoy here.

Sand Dunes, the best sandbox in Colorado. Cyberwest displays some of the best snapshots this side of the Rio Grande. And when all you cowboys are bored wrestling cattle, you can find a sunset to follow in the Events Calendar. Most of the news features focus on Colorado cities and ski resorts. Git along, little cyber doggie. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

dEPARTURE fROM nORMAL

http://www.teleport.com/~xwinds/dfn.html

Here we have an art and poetry magazine that seems willing to publish any work slipped through the proverbial mail slot. These arbiters of aesthetics either have low standards, or were scraping for content, and accepted some material that could only *claim* to be poetry because it didn't follow the rules of sentence structure. Bad grammar is not the soul of poetry. Most of the site's content is pretty decent, though, and attendant imagery is quite nice. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Depth Probe

http://www.atdesign.com:80/~ake/cgi/reel/base/Studios/Eyzaguirre/

Ah, the personal computer revolution

Perhaps we should be worried? Depth Probe is about modern culture in America, but its content is actually pretty shallow.

and its ability to put the power of the press on anyone's desk. Now the ramblings of any idiot can be distributed to the masses. Depth Probe bills itself as "a collection of thoughts, ideas, comments, and reviews on modern American culture." But it seemed more like the online diary of a single individual. The tone is semi-New Age, with roller-blading and snowboarding content thrown in here and there. While you'll find a lot of material, a depth probe can only go so deep in shallow waters. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Electronic Newsstand Homepage

http://www.enews.com/

Instead of walking down to the corner bookstore for the latest business journal or newspaper, consumers can find free articles from popular magazines at the Electronic Newsstand. The Newsstand includes publications that cover entertainment, technology, business, automobiles, health, recreation, and politics.

Read the latest South African news in *Weekly Mail & Guardian*, or discover the best method to catch trout in *Field & Stream*. The entertainment section lacks the wide variety of links that the business and computer sections boast. And don't try to find an underground zine

No need to brave the weather to enjoy the latest issue of your favorite mainstream magazine.

such as *bOING bOING* or *ZUG* here — this newsstand is pretty much oriented around mainstream titles. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Hot Hollywood Gossip

http://members.aol.com/editorman/gossip.html

Random scribbles on bathroom walls have better graphics and content than Hot Hollywood Gossip. This text-only zine takes all the fun out of talking behind people's backs. Instead of feeding our heads with eye candy and tasty tales, Hot Hollywood Gossip teases readers with one-sentence rumors, and a series of sarcastic questions. Readers can ask for free e-mail subscriptions of the "unabridged" gossip column. Then again, a trip to the bathroom may be more entertaining. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Imagination

http://www.busim.ee.boun.edu.tr/imagination/

Imagine a literary journal with odd graphics, unique story plots, and experimental poetry. Imagination takes readers into a cerebral journey of SciFaiku (science fiction haiku) and virtual reality, and throws in an art gallery consisting of blue blobs. Unlike other online publications, Imagination isn't concerned about cashing in on subscriptions or wooing

Imagination is a zine dedicated to remaining commercially pure.

advertisers. It proudly stands alone as an exceptional literary journal barely escaping the clutches of commercialism. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

In Vivo

http://freenet3.scri.fsu.edu:81/users/jtillman/

In Vivo is a literary magazine willing to consider unsolicited submissions. It's not entirely mind-blowing, but it is a great example of using the Web to circumvent cost-prohibitive print and paper endeavors. The editor who sifts through outside submissions is sufficiently critical. Content is better than average, and the whole site is well-organized, including the author index, which spans archives as well. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

indy

http://grove.ufl.edu/~jrm/indy.html

This is the Web presence for a magazine that covers independent and alternative comics. Primarily consisting of comics-oriented reviews and interviews, the site's content is repositioned material

The great content and scanned cover art entice, but there's no info on how to subscribe to this print publication.

from the print version, and it's very good. The site also features a lot of scanned cover art. One page offers subscription information, but, unfortunately, you can't subscribe online. You should love the links interspersed throughout text; they shoot you to other comic book resources on the Web. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Kill Yourself

http://hops.cs.jhu.edu/~mbk/killyourself.html

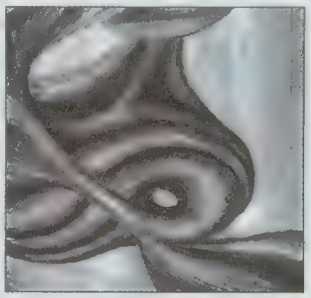
Kill Yourself? Indeed. Readers may simply die from boredom waiting for this site to download. Kill Yourself focuses on punk and ska music, as well as political issues. The publication claims to be a "sociopolitical e-zine that explores everything that's wrong with the world today." If readers live long enough for the huge logos to finish moseying on in, they may be impressed by the angry twenty something commentary. From essays on Bosnia to debates on censorship, Kill Yourself attacks issues from all sides. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Lady in the Radiator

http://www.etext.org/Zines/TLITR/

I particularly like the mission statement, which states the site is "produced by a bunch of kids to counteract the soul-draining boredom of suburban life." While it isn't the slickest thing you'll find



Lady in the Radiator's young creators are working hard to combat suburban angst.

on the Web, it's got a lot of heart and sophistication, especially considering the contributors' young ages. Issue 2.5 consisted of one long page full of art and poetry ravings. I hope the editors triumph in their creative fight against "suboredom" life. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Net Rag

http://www.infostarbase.com/tnr.html

Cha-ching! It's easy to hear the cyber cash registers ring when visiting Net Rag. For a weekly $99 sponsorship fee, a company can have its URL displayed on this online zine. It's confusing whether Net Rag is a magazine or merely a series of commercials. The site publishes more advertisements than articles. Even though section categories range from animals to finance, many of the articles are text-only and lack personality. Somehow, the name Net Rag seems appropriate. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

Pneuma WorldWind

http://www.turnpike.net/~Pneuma/front.htm

Pneuma WorldWind is as cryptic as its name. Pneuma editors promise not to follow traditional tenets of online publishing. This Web journal does such a good job being non-traditional, most readers may wonder if the publication is being obscure or elitist. Instead of labeling a section "fiction" or "related links," sections are entitled Educate, Old Capitol, and Lifebreath. Once this journal figures out its audience, readers should be able to breathe easier. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Although it's unclear what the "Old Capitol" section is about, there are nice illustrations in it.

Tripod

http://www.tripod.com/

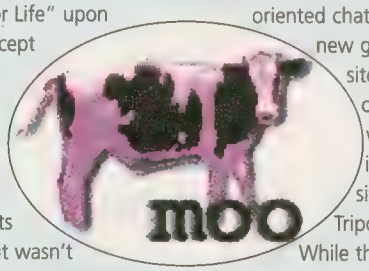
Perusing the first well-designed page of Tripod, I was expecting to find a hip and somewhat frivolous e-zine for mindless GenXers. I happily scanned through the table of contents, but all the articles I ran across seemed overly serious and practical. Advice on how to invest my money? An article and test about personal safety techniques in an urban environment? Where's the fun in *that*? Just wait, though.

According to its mission statement, Tripod attempts to bestow the "Tools for Life" upon people in their mid-20s. This concept took shape in 1992, when Bo Peabody and Brett Hershey, two Williams College students, and Richard Sabot, a Williams economics professor, were working on a project to teach young adults about financial investments. But it wasn't until 1994, when Peabody attended a demonstration of the Web, that the group found the appropriate publishing medium for Tripod. The editors expanded content to include other practical sections, such as Travel (with some of the Fodor's books online), Work, Health, Community, etc. The News section has grown to become a major component of the site, with daily updates and extensive coverage of the 1996 political campaigns. But

travel
Travel Tool of the Week
service:
Get Your Act Together & Take it on the Road
features:
: On the Loose in London
: Prague for Beginners

Tripod is much more than an online publication. It's truly interested in promoting Internet communities.

This explains why it has its own Multi-user Object-Oriented (MOO) environment, a graphics-oriented chat space. Tripod has also broken new ground by being the first Web site to allow users to create their own personal Web pages. "We wanted users to start establishing a face and a presence on the site," says Ethan Zuckerman, Tripod's Web keeper.



While the site's founders and a good portion of its staff are Williams College alumni, Zuckerman did post-graduate work at nearby Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he recruited some great art talent to work on graphics. Tripod's page design is one of the best I've seen on the Web. You'll find extremely good integration between text and art.

A staff of 16 works out of a converted Greek revival house in Williamstown, MA, although the site's actual servers are in Northampton because of the proximity to a T1 line. With investments and advertising dollars starting to line its coffers, Tripod looks like it will have a promising future as a top Web site. —*WKC*

tripod
tools for life
community
Tired of the budget bullshit? Use Political Playbook to contact Newt and his cronies
living
Life isn't difficult. It's remembering what to do that's tough
money
The Dow is down again. How's your bank balance?
health
Isn't it time you did something about those ugly warts? Ask Doctor Bob, because he cares.
work
Don't have crazy warrantarked #10 heavy bond paper? No worries – write your resume
travel
dream of sunny places

net rating: *overall:* **A+**

Sea of Noise

http://www.mindport.net/~szarka/sonj.html

The typical zine used to be a photocopied pamphlet of barely edited, unadulterated creativity. Web technology has allowed electronic zines to be as slick as hard copy publications. It's kind of a shame, really, but Sea of Noise manages to retain that zine look by publishing in unenhanced HTML. While it may not be all that pretty, there is something comforting about the look. You'll find good articles with a sophisticated sense of humor, plus record reviews. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

VAJ Magazine Issue

http://www.etext.org/Zines/VAJ/

VAJ is a Canadian music magazine featuring interviews and reviews of underground and independent bands such as Squirm, Forgotten Valley Gene Pool, Stone Tree, and Mother Earth. Even though the zine promises exclusive focus on indie bands, the main feature in one of the issues is a full-length interview with the mainstream band Faith No More. If readers want to take a break from another tour bus tale, they can also read movie reviews and humorous horoscopes. VAJ is not a typical online music mag, and that makes it worth a visit in and of itself. —*BJB*

Francophiles will find sounds, tastes, and more to satisfy their senses.

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Virtual Baguette

http://www.mmania.com/

Attendez! Attendez, Francophiles! The Virtual Baguette is a French online magazine that graciously provides an English language version. The gimmick is to attack all our senses by offering sections for sound, taste, sight, touch, and speech. (And smell? I guess smell isn't a sense in France.) The Sound area covers material like French rock bands, while Taste offers recipes. Graphics and content are great, a little Java game is fun, and the English translations are downright quaint. —*WKC*

VAJ covers alternative Canadian bands, though it does include a long interview with mainstream success Faith No More.

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Quanta

http://www.etext.org/Zines/Quanta/

Quanta never compromises between quality and quantity. This online science fiction publication features numerous short stories about robots, computers, vampires, big black cats, and headless snakes. Published both on and off the Web, the publication is described by its editors as "shareword." They request a donation from those readers who enjoy the stories — i.e., readers should put money where their mouths are. Quanta's content makes up for the lack of dazzling graphics and illustrations. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Though graphics aren't dazzling, the sci-fi content makes up for that.

Sackcloth and Ashes

http://www.millcomm.com/~dfattig/index.html

Wow, a magazine for hip, irreverent Christians. This strange little e-zine accepts unsolicited contributions, and is published whenever its editors have enough material and time to get it together. One seemingly regular column is titled "Heresy," and contains a description of some kind of alternate belief system. A very strange mix, but one that's also quite enjoyable. Some issues are available in PDF (Portable Document Format), the Adobe Acrobat format. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

reference

Annual Reports Library

http://www.zpub.com/sf/arl/

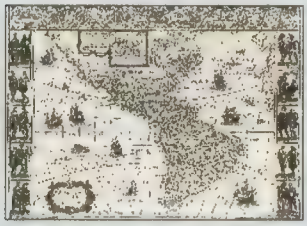
A well-written annual report can be the glue that binds a monolithic corporation to its humble stock holders. The Annual Report Library is a graphically barren site that nonetheless offers some valuable tips on writing reports. It should instill confidence in even the most skeptical investor. The site offers a report checklist, an area on appropriate report semantics, and examples of effective reports from Blue Chip companies. Buy a membership, and more resources will follow. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Rare Map Collection

http://scarlett.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/maps.html

No one should be lost in a time warp without a map. In the Hargrett Library at the University of Georgia are more than



Historians won't be disappointed by this site, which collects rare maps.

800 rare maps spanning 500 years. On this Web site, only 20 percent of the entire collection is presented. Historians will not be disappointed with the selection of early maps depicting the New World, Colonial America, Revolutionary America, and Civil War America. Many of the maps focus on more specific topics, such as urban planning and transportation. The site offers little textual information on the significance of the changing maps, but this online collection is a rare Web find. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Rulers

http://www.geopages.com/Athens/1058/rulers.html

Kingdoms rise and fall almost as quickly as URL addresses change. The Rulers site makes sure the presidents, prime ministers, and royalty of the world are not forgotten, at least not online. Look up the first secretaries of the Albanian Party of Labour, or count how many world leaders have the first name of "Ed." Leaders' birth dates are included, as well as the years they died. The Rulers site is devoid of any mug shots, but remains an excellent resource for those interested in world history and politics. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

United States Patent and Trademark Office

http://www.uspto.gov/

Inventors who think they've created the best widget in the world should check out this site before hitting the marketplace. Find out what's needed to patent an invention, and who to contact for legal advice. Discover the proper way to revive an abandoned trademark application. Eye-twinkling graphics are absent, but the site actually serves a purpose by allowing users to download crucial forms necessary to safeguard inventions. There's no reason to be a mad scientist when one can be a happy inventor. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

WordNet

http://www.cogsci.princeton.edu/~wn/

WordNet can be described in one word: dull. As an online reference system, WordNet claims to explore the current psycholinguistic theories of human memory that say nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are organized into synonym sects. Each sect then represents one underlying lexical concept. The only concept most of us will pick up from WordNet is that most psychologists and professors can't grasp the idea of quality Web design. With absolutely zero graphics, WordNet bores you from the beginning. The site encourages you to download WordNet papers and software, but never explains why most visitors would care to do so. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **F**

religion

The Pope Page

http://www.catholic.net/RCC/POPE/Pope.html

The Pope Page is adorned with the kind extravagance found in the Vatican — hypertexted pages lined with golden wall paper and decadent images of His Holiness John Paul II and other Popes past. The site is thorough, and leaves one with a feeling of complete papal saturation, though it's certainly interesting, and useful for historians and curious Catholics. The section containing writings of past Popes is an especially fascinating archive. —*KV*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Buddhism World

http://dual.iems.nwu.edu/~cwshen/buddha.html

With nice colors, graphics, tables, and organization, this site flows well. The content, while still growing, is fairly comprehensive. Especially well done is the link list. It's extensive, includes a special section in Chinese, and covers not only the Web, but also Usenet, FTP, Gopher, and e-mail resources. You'll also find vegetarian recipes and archived copies of the Electronic Buddhists Society's Newsletter. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Gospel Communications Network

http://www.gospelcom.net/

In a word: huge. Absolutely, unquestionably, this is one of the largest, most extensive, and thorough of all Christian databases. Learn about films to see, newsletters to read, chats to participate in, childrens' bible studies, the Top 40 Resources, and on, and on, and on. The site is updated regularly, and despite the vast amount of content, it's easy to navigate. Cool icons and pleasing backgrounds. A great jumping point for Web-o-holic Christians. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Catholic Information Center

http://www.catholic.net/

I sometimes daydream about the treasures that must lie within the Vatican library and archives. Imagine all the forgotten manuscripts, awaiting their day of discovery. Unfortunately, you'll find no digitized images of lost tomes at this site. Instead, general information concerning the Popes, the catechism, the Bible, and the Catholic church is available to the curious. Want the real scoop on the the Galileo affair? What does the Church think about evolution? You can find the answers here. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

InterGalactic House of Fruitcake

http://www.tiac.net/users/ighf/

The God of the Old Testament is a newcomer to human history. Other deities were worshiped long before He came on the scene. Most of them have been long forgotten; a few still inspire dedicated bands of True Believers. The god OTIS traces a lineage to the Sumerians, a group that clearly understood the need for a god capable of fireworks. This site offers a clever introduction to OTIS and

This is the Web site for all things having to do with the god OTIS.

his/her cohorts. Believers can keep up with the latest OTIS happenings, review doctrine, eye Church leaders, and more. A terrific example of the Web as a tool of religious indoctrination. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Jewish Communications Network

http://www.jcn18.com/

This space is one of the best topical sites on the Web. Layout and organization are fantastic. I found the images here to be pleasing and helpful. An enormous amount of material is presented in a clever and interesting fashion. I'm a committed Dobbsian, but I still found

Great graphics, content, and organization make the JCN site an example of what organizations can achieve on the Web.

myself engrossed in the oil menorah/candles controversy. I cannot speak too highly of this site. For believers, it is a must-have bookmark. Non-believers should visit to catch a glimpse of what the Web should be. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Religion of the Humanities

http://www.roth-church.org/roth0101.htm

This is the official site and archive of a "new religion of humanity, Nature, and the future of our existence." The content describes a doctrine of typical humanitarian ideals. Unfortunately, the fact that this group is committed to being an Internet-based church has left it faceless; the founders seem so devoted to the Zen ideals of ego transcendence that they haven't even put their names on the site. Membership in the church costs $24 a year. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Servant Life

http://www.goshen.net/sl/

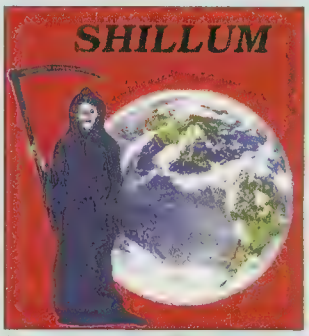
Servant Life isn't a newsletter for domestics, but rather an advice publication for Christians. The name comes from the premise that Christians are "serving God." This Web site is just a front end for an Adobe Acrobat-formatted publication that can be downloaded in whole or in portions. The tone of Servant Life is very enlightened, encouraging qualities like acceptance and tolerance. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Shillum

http://www.digital-cafe.com/~wbent/shillum0.html

I love apocalyptic literature, and the Book of Revelations is one of my favorite works. I can't help chuckling at the thought of Christian airplane pilots being raptured away, leaving unguided planes to carry heretics to a spectacular crash. This site serves one purpose: the distribution of the Shillum document, an end-time analysis reminiscent of *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Of interest to conspiracy fans are references to the



Be warned, the site cautions: "The end is not near, it is here."

"Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion," an anti-Semitic forgery concocted around the turn of the century. I love rants, but this meager and mediocre missive is unsatisfying. —*SS*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Technosophy

http://www.technosophy.com/

Technosophy is a pseudo-religion that relies on the premise that the human body is a piece of technology. Oh, the

Feeling like you're just a cog in the wheel? That's the general message here.

intricacies of semantics. Terry Alden, an individual with a savior-complex, has posted these five or six text-filled pages to spout his views on life and the world. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

science

3-D Reconstruction of Ancient Egyptian Mummy

http://www.pavilion.co.uk/HealthServices/Brighton HealthCare/mummy.htm

Our intense fascination with mummies can lead to intensive research, and this page is a good example of that. It's a technical paper by seven medical scientists reporting on the use of computer tomography, radiology, and 3D reconstruction to study unwrapped mummies in the British Museum's huge collection. Most of the page describes various research findings, and there are excellent large GIFs illustrating a number of their descriptions. The site should be fascinating to Egyptologists, amateur detectives, and those pondering the human response to death. Not for the faint of heart — how the ancients removed the brains of the deceased is decidedly gross. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C+**

Aquatic Ape Info

http://www.brad.ac.uk/~dmorgan/aat.html

You've gotta love Dewi Morgan, the creator of this page and the grandson of science writer Elaine Morgan, a propo-

AAT

The graphics aren't the reason to visit this site; an interesting theory is.

nent of the theory that certain primates experienced an "aquatic stage" before evolving into humans. An alternative to theories promoting the more generally accepted "savannah" stage, this theory has its fans, and you can read their opinions here. To be fair, Dewi addresses other evolutionary theories, and admits his inherent bias. This somewhat plain page will make you curious about our biological evolution. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Holography

http://www.holo.com/holo/gram.html

It would be nice if this site included more background information on holography for those who aren't yet familiar with the science behind this amazing 3D imaging process. The Holography Domain includes a cool "holographic pattern generator" that you can manipulate by changing number parameters — excellent for math- and trig-heads. The site also features a few links to holo news, answers to holo-related e-mail, and references to companies working with holograms and lasers. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Kinship and Social Organization

http://www.umanitoba.ca/anthropology/kintitle.html

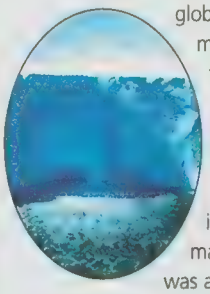
This page from the University of Manitoba anthropology department is a good idea that falls somewhat short.

Virtual Antarctica

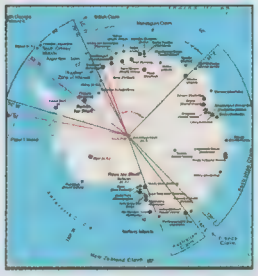
http://www.terraquest.com/

SITE OF THE MONTH net APRIL 1996

Dump your Thursday night "Deep Space Nine" TV-watching ritual, and check out the equally alien environs presented by Virtual Antarctica, a superb marriage of nuts-and-bolts scientific data, novice-friendly language, and dignified, intuitively navigated Web design. Stuck smack-dab on the bottom of our spinning globe, Antarctica begs very few comparisons to typical earthly ecosystems. In fact, when you leave this online tour of the globe's most inhospitable and misunderstood continent, you'll feel like you're sharing this earth with a land as distant as Beta Antares XI.

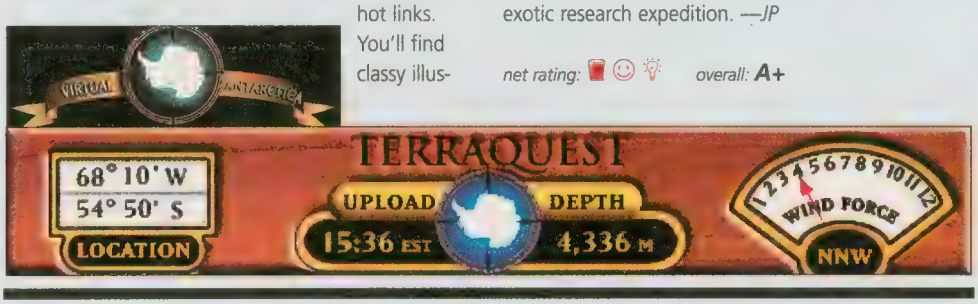


Virtual Antarctica may be considered an experiment in "instant-publishing." The majority of the site's content was accumulated and uploaded via satellite links during a 16-day expedition on the Livonia, a sturdy, no-nonsense sea vessel expressly built for traversing the frigid polar ice caps. The ship's crew included members of Terraquest, an innovative "adventure travel" company that intends to publish many more online expeditions of exotic locales (future stops include the Galapagos Islands and Mount Kilimanjaro). One could hardly ask for more comprehensive or well-illustrated content. In many ways, Virtual Antarctica is a glossy coffee table book come to life through the power of interactive hot links. You'll find classy illustrations, artistically rendered maps, and beautiful photography suitable for *National Geographic*. The background textures, which include screened-back images of flowing cursive script and sea-depth notation, are particularly effective.



All of this art direction is complemented by a wide breadth of text. Topical areas include an extensive ship's log, and easily digested information on Antarctica ecology, science, history, and environment. And, should all this heady data bog you down, you can always read the crew members' poetry: "Twas the week before Christmas/And all through the ship/Few passengers were stirring/For most were quite sick./Some tourists were restless and pacing the bridge/With visions of penguins and ice, not from the fridge." Aesthetics aside, the poem reflects the site's levity. Passage aboard the Livonia doesn't seem to have been like a Club Med adventure, but neither like a winter in Stalingrad. All in all, Virtual Antarctica lends a sense of inviting accessibility to an extremely remote locale, and should beckon adventuresome Web surfers to drop their mice, and sign up for an exotic research expedition. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**



CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

Someone's uncredited research paper on social organization is laid out as an "interactive tutorial." All this really means is that you jump from one page or section to another — as if any other action would be possible. The tone of the presentation is very clinical. Since there are no footnotes or bibliographic resources, you're limited to internal content. If you're already up on "systems of descent" or "lineage exogamy," then stop here. But if not, better find some more accessible anthropology lessons first. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Laser Focus World

http://www.lfw.com/www/home.htm

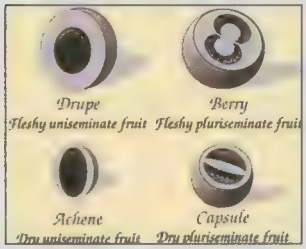
Feeling electro-optical? Then come on down to Laser Focus World, a monthly trade publication for those in the laser and optics industries. You can search back issues, read selected portions of the current edition (news, features and departments), send mail to the editor, or fill out a form that may qualify you for a free subscription. You'll also find links to other Pennwell publications, including *Laser Report*, and *Industrial Laser Review*. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Seeds of Life

http://www.next.com/~jmh/SeedsOfLife/

Francoise Brenckmann has created a very handsome bilingual site extolling



Learn about the four main types of fruit, plus the poetics of seedlings here.

the virtues of seeds, how cleverly they travel and germinate, and how they provide us with life in the form of fruits, cereals, and grains. Brenckmann wanted to document "this tiny and scattered world" through photos, and also wanted to share her findings. Seeds of Life is like an excellent research paper, with various sections and terrific photos. Brenckmann is something of a poet, and liberally borrows from Henry Thoreau to present the value of seeds in a larger context. Seeds of Life is a wonderful site, and is a model for employing the Web as a learning tool. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Society for Amateur Scientists

http://www.thesphere.com/SAS/

Science literacy is the goal of the Society for Amateur Scientists, a support organization that wants to help people "with a passion to do science find the limits of their own genius." You can learn about the interests of its members and contact them via e-mail; join SAS; start a chapter yourself; share your research or questions in an electronic forum; and query SAS for help with technical illustrations. There's even an online swap meet, so if you need a vacuum tube kit, X-ray tubes, or an oil diffusion pump, SAS is a good first stop. An interesting caveat: SAS "does not conduct research into paranormal phenomena." —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Aurora Page

http://www.geo.mtu.edu/weather/aurora/

Those who have witnessed the Aurora Borealis never forget the sight. Geologist Michael Dolan's homage to the Northern Lights illuminates the whys of this seemingly magical phenomenon. He also provides links to forecasts and geophysical reports on sitings, and a host of images of various auroral happenings in the far north of Alaska, Canada, and Scandinavia. There are lots of links to other space, sun, and astronomy sites, too. —*KW*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

The Tomb of Niankhkhanum and Khanumhotep

http://www.sirius.com/~reeder/niankh.html

Egyptologist Greg Reeder has created a page focusing on the 1964 discovery of the tomb of two men who were part of a Fifth Dynasty Pharaoh's entourage. Reeder provides excellent inline images of what archaeologists have reconstructed, including a floor plan of the building itself. There is no documentation of sources, however. For more information, it's best to head to Reeder's home page, which contains scores of links to Egyptian sites and resources. —*KW*

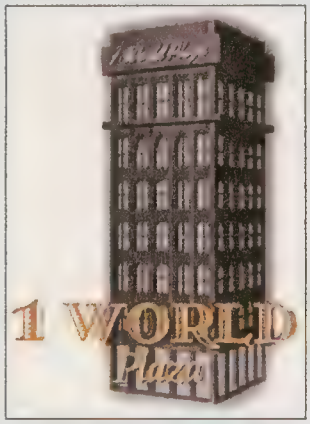
net rating: *overall:* **C**

shopping

1 World Plaza

http://www2.clever.net/1world/plaza/shop.htm

This electronic shopping mall has a directory of 35 online stores that sell everything from audio books to baby



1World Plaza boasts an elegant design and 35 online stores.

blankets. It's organized well and designed nicely, but the stores aren't located on-site. You'll just find links to the stores' own Web addresses. Moreover, the mall offers no amenities like security, or a food court. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

America's Choice Mall

http://choicemall.com/

When you enter this e-mall, you'll find a small variety of products — mostly strange, mail-order niche things. Most of the storefronts are on-site, and online ordering is available through a secure form. The organization, though, is a little odd, allowing the user to select a mall by state. This doesn't make too much sense in the extra-geographical realm of the Internet. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Bargain Finder Agent Prototype

http://bf.cstar.ac.com/bf/

This brilliant little utility from Andersen Consulting does your music shopping for you. Just enter the artist and album title you want to find, and Bargain Finder goes to nine online music stores, and comes back with prices. Or it would if CDNow, NetMarket, and CDLand weren't blocking it — Bargain Finder seems to have problems integrating with other stores' search forms. The only store it consistently returned prices from was CDworld. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Contacts Plus

http://www.w2.com/docs2/b7/contactsplus.html

In these days of over-priced medical care, there is absolutely no reason to buy contact lenses from your eye doctor when you can get exactly the same pre-

You'll never have to pay full price for contact lenses again if you become a Contacts Plus customer.

scriptions from a big-volume mail order house. Contacts Plus offers all the brands, and says it "will meet or beat any printed prices." 'Nuff said. Just fill out a Netscape form, and fax in a copy of your prescription. Boom. You're done. A slew of companies offer similar services via the Internet, but Contacts Plus is, shockingly, one of the few with a cooperative server. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

DreamShop

http://pathfinder.com/@@ws6eDMGEgQMAQI9t/DreamShop/

One of the more cumbersome URLs in existence hosts TimeWarner's DreamShop, a collection of upscale catalogs that include Eddie Bauer, The Sharper Image, Williams-Sonoma, and The Bombay Company. The site is colorful despite its sanitized corporate feel,

Though there's a sanitized feel to this colorful site, you'll find a handy search engine to find the product of your choice.

and suggests an aura of having never been touched by human hands or imagination. Features include the Personal Shopper search engine, which facilitates searches under Timeless Classics, Under $20, and Indulge Yourself. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Jumbo Shareware

http://www.jumbo.com/

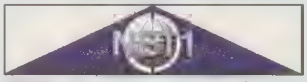
With almost 50,000 programs, Jumbo can definitely claim to be the Internet's "Official Shareware" site. Shareware and freeware are categorized by type, then operating system. Once you find something you like, you'll link to a list of FTP sites from which the software can be downloaded. The number of sites varies, depending on the software. Nice graphics. If a shareware or freeware program exists, it's probably here. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Net 1

http://www.netchex.com/

Net 1 promotes NetChex, a system for secure Internet money transactions.



More vendors need to adopt Net 1's NetChex security system before this becomes a viable online shopping choice.

NetChex software can be downloaded from this site, though it only exists in PC format. Unfortunately, when I visited, few vendors had adopted NetChex as a standard. If nobody accepts our NetChex, we can't very well spend our money, can we? An impressive looking site on the surface, but NetChex has yet to deliver the goods. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Omaha Steaks International

http://www.omahasteaks.com/

The company sells itself as a mail order steak house, but offers a suite of flavor- and fat-rich specialty items ranging from Stuffed Sole with Scallops and Crabmeat to New York Cheesecake. Just peruse the enticing photos and price lists (neatly arranged in Netscape tables), and order away. In less than three days, the delicacies, elaborately packaged in a seemingly hermetically sealed "deep freeze" container, should arrive at your door. This site also offers a rather incomplete recipe section — you've probably seen more extensive recipe content in "community outreach" throwaways from your local electric company. —*JP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

sports

Air Hockey
http://homepage.interaccess.com/~tweissm/
The Air Hockey page warns that if you aren't using Netscape, the site might not look the way it's supposed to. I found no Netscape-only tricks to speak of. In fact, I found a dry layout with even dryer pictures. But that's not what Air Hockey is about, and the rest of the site is loaded with content, including bios of key air hockey personalities, rules and procedures, a terminology glossary, and a few essay-type articles. So, while you shouldn't expect to be blown away by innovative design hoopla, this is a great site for die-hard air hockey fans. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

American Poolplayers Association
http://www.bigmagic.com/pages/apa/apa_home.htm
The American Poolplayers Association site provides eight-ball rules and definitions, a What's New in the APA section, the 1996 Calendar and Champion Result, and a list of pool-related links. Though the design elements are not unsophisticated, the pages are all identical, and, consequently, a little difficult to sift through. —*KB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Body Mechanics
http://www.halcyon.com/dcvaughn/bodymech.html
A resource for Northwest competitive bodybuilders, Body Mechanics offers training tips from a certified personal trainer; "Almost Non-Fat Recipes;" and more dietary information than you can shake a glycemic index at. (*Way* more.) Garry's Nutrition Hints is for hard-core hardbodies only. Other highlights are a gallery of bodybuilding competitors flexing for the camera, and the National Physique Committee's 1996 competition schedule. —*KB*

You might look like this if you peruse the site long enough.

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Flyfishing Antventures
http://www.teleport.com/~anthonyn/
Yes, *Antventures*. It's short for Anthony. Anthony is seriously into flyfishing, and if you are too, you should look at his

Anthony's dad is a flyfisher, too, and you'll learn all about the big ones he landed, and lost, at this site.

page. There are lots of stories about landing the big one, and pictures of guys up to their butts in cold water, clutching fish and grinning like raccoons. Anthony appears to be a stand-up guy and square shooter, but if the appeal of the sport is lost on you, don't bother dipping your pole here. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Global Snow and Surf Report
http://www.geezer.com/
This site — Geezer for short — is a great idea. Instead of presenting the standard press kit-type Web page, Barefoot Snoboards has sponsored functional content: daily updated snow reports, and links to snow and surf

Nice graphics and dozens of ski resort conditions make this a good site for ski enthusiasts.

resources. Advertising is quietly played in the background. However, the surf reports were a month old when I visited, and I suspect that some of the snow reports were, as well. The link to the Resort Sports Network site, however, provided fresh-dated camera shots of snow resorts such as Heavenly, CA, and Vail, CO. A good-looking resource. —*KB*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Little League Baseball
http://www.littleleague.org/
The prospect of reviewing this site excited me. I can't help but twinkle at the notion of a Little League Baseball Web page. But upon inspection, I realized the news was old, and the graphics/creativity component was severely lacking. But the site does offer summer camp information, links to external resources, and an informative FAQ. Maybe as the season picks up, the site will, too. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Lumberjack Entertainment
http://www.starinfo.com/ljguide/lumberjack.html
This is a thinly disguised advert for the "Old Time Lumberjack Show." Since lumberjacks aren't really interested in promoting regulated competition (they instead aim for good-timey fair events), you won't find rules or requirements, or even detailed descriptions of how games are played. However, photos indicate events that demand chopping, sawing and climbing wood. The page *does not* mention the infamous Monty Python sketch. Personally, if these guys wielded chainsaws in evening gowns, I'd *pay* to see it. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Mauy Thai
http://www.magicnet.net/~pkordel/muaythai.html

Equipment and video sources related to Thai boxing are the big draw here.

Mauy Thai is the native term for Thai boxing. The main difference between regular boxing and Mauy Thai is that you can kick opponents in the head. Punching is allowed, too, but nothing beats a well-placed flying foot to the temple. Some dude named Roman Dekker is mentioned a lot, and appears to be an icon of some kind. This site has links to other martial arts pages, but is itself thin on information and pics. Consider this merely a transfer station on the greater Mauy Thai railway. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C-**

Shotgun Report
http://www.interactive.net/~auric/index.html
Life's too short not to play with shotguns, and the Shotgun Report will tell you how to play hard and shoot fast. The Technoid, who claims he is "often in error, but never in doubt," provides amusing, if not comprehensive, technical tracts on such things as Barrel modifications, Gas-operated semi-automatic shotguns, and maintenance tips. Apart from constantly referring to himself in the third-person, you gotta like the Technoid's attitude — especially when you're making complicated modifications to firearms. —*KB*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

SoccerNet
http://www.soccernet.com/
SoccerNet is a big, big site for the English and Scottish soccer divisions. Get the latest news and files, link to team profiles (with adorable little shirts and shorts icons that actually match team colors), or place bets in the Soccer Pools area. The graphics for the most part are gaudy, tacky, eye-bending spectacles, but if you can get past that, this is a decent page. Most of the focus is on team profiles, history, players, and awards. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Tauromaquia
http://www.clark.net/pub/jgbustam/toros/toros.html
Tauromaquia? That's bullfighting to you, shriner. You'll read a detailed history, which explains that bullfighting was

Tauromaquia demystifies bullfighting, a 1,000-year-old sport.

invented about 1,000 years ago for bored knights to work off pent-up blood lust when they were at peace with their neighbors, and needed to kill something to pass the time. An extensive glossary and primer clearly explain everything simply and informatively. This sport ignites politically correct fireworks in folks — myself included — but it was interesting to read about as a cultural event. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

travel

007 Travel
http://www.omnitravel.com/007travel.html
Lots of forms. Lots and lots and lots of forms. That's what you'll find at the 007 Travel site, which acts mainly as a device for a crafty travel agency to collect information on your travel plans. Want to know the lowest prices on flights to London? Fill out a form. Renting a car overseas? Fill out a form. Need to know where the 007 Travel agency is located? Sorry, you're out of luck: That information isn't available. You'll find some useful information here, such as a list of moderately priced international hotels and restaurants, but otherwise, this is a mess of broken links, missing graphics, and mystery. Beware sending your credit card number to a company that doesn't give *its* phone number or mailing address. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **D**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	*A visual 10!*	*Rocket science material*
Fair amount of content	*Appealing, not great*	*Not stupid*
Needs more content	*A dog*	*Needs a brain*

Condé Nast Traveler

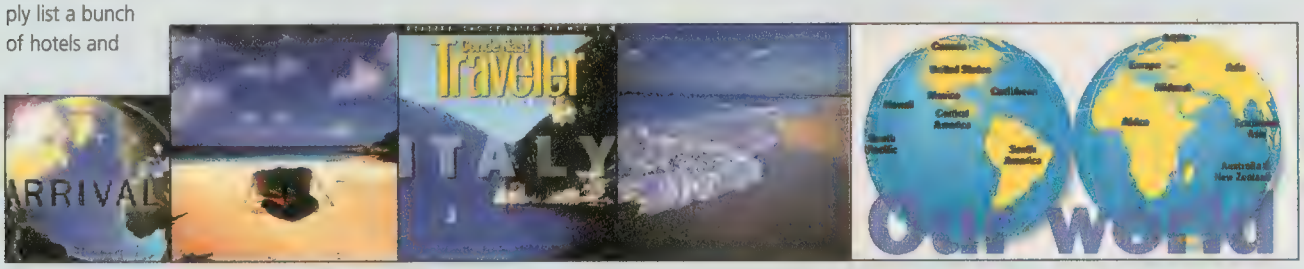
http://www.cntraveler.com/

The sophisticated traveler knows that the crème de la crème of travel publications is *Condé Nast Traveler*. In the archaic age of print and pulp, this magazine was an incredible resource for information on worldly destinations. What individual's travel library would be complete without a large section of back issues as a reference for vacation plans? Now, in the digital age, we don't have room for extensive libraries, or large collections of printed information. Fortunately, *Condé Nast Traveler* isn't bound to its print past, and now has an online presence that is much, much more than repositioned print content.

The core of the site is an incredible database of vacation spots, which are critiqued with extremely informative qualitative assessments. While many travel-related sites will simply list a bunch of hotels and restaurants to be found in a given city, the Condé Nast Traveler site offers well-written descriptions of the various aspects of a location. The key areas include Hotels, Dining, Access, and Weather. The site also offers a number of very intelligent and creative ways to sift through its core database; each way reflects a different intuitive communication model. The Great Escape area is the most obvious road to access. A clickable world map allows you to zero in on a continent, then a country, then an individual city. This is good for people who "think globally," and like using maps in their everyday lives.

For people who care less about geography and more about amenity, Condé Nast offers Concierge as a navigational tool. This section guides you through a series of forms on which you enter the parameters of your dream vacation. Concierge then returns an increasingly refined list of destinations that match your criteria. Snapshots is an ingenious navigational device for those driven by visual cues. Four photos are displayed on a page. Click on a photo, and you'll shoot over to information on the illustrated locale. If none of the photos are appealing, clicking a button will load four new images. The site also includes a good section of travel-related news, all of which is very relevant to planning a trip. All in all, Condé Nast Traveler is the definitive resource for online travel planning. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **A+**



American Airlines

http://www.amrcorp.com/aa_home/aa_home.htm

Now we know what all those flight attendants do when they're not serving drinks and emptying barf bags: They're writing HTML code. That's the only way American could have produced such a mammoth site, with pages on more than 50 subjects, such as flight schedules, fleet composition, and corporate structure. Unfortunately, AA's most useful wing — the online ticket-booking service known as Sabre — isn't directly accessible via the Web site. —*TG*

This mammoth site has flight schedules and fleet composition, but not online booking, at least not yet.

net rating: *overall:* **B+**

Bridge

http://www.nmt.edu/~bridge/

Now that *Monk* magazine and its imitators have gotten some recognition, on-the-road writers are springing up all over the place. But how many of them get around on bicycles laden with 125 pounds of crap? That's what Holly Hughes and George MacLeod have done since 1993. They've covered more than 35,000 miles, carrying a message of community art to distant towns and writing, writing, writing about it. These folks have real heart, and that's what makes this site great. Be sure to check out Holly's statue/sculpture of Einstein, made of ballpoint pens, tennis balls, and 5-1/4" floppy disks: It's great fun, and captures the site's spirit perfectly. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

GNN Travelers Center

http://www.gnn.com/gnn/meta/travel/index.html

With outstanding feature stories and an excellent list of travel-related resources, GNN hovers near the top of all travel sites. Instead of breaking down travel into logistical compartments of expense reports, packing lists, and so on, GNN documents traveling from the perspective of the people who do it. The stories are real, often exciting, and offer fresh commentary about life on the road. —*LS*

Find out about traveling from the perspective of people who do it.

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Life Following the Dead

http://www.rox.com/quarry/NUVO/

I've had a fantasy of collecting all my old letters, souvenirs, photos, diaries, and tape recordings to definitively archive my life on a Web site. A full life is perhaps too ambitious to fully document, but how about a road trip? That's what Joe Nickell has done, transcribing copious notes of his adventures riding a Magic Bus and following the Grateful Dead. What makes this site great is the minutiae he captured in sound and imagery. Example: You not only read "Marty curses loudly," you also get to hear him. Awesome. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Rec.Travel Library: Worldwide Travel and Tourism

http://Alpha.Solutions.Net/rec-travel/

Newsgroups often have stewards who are kind and organized enough to encapsulate community wisdom in a relevant FAQ file, but few boast the riches that Internet Solutions has archived for this Web-based rec.travel.* hierarchy. Besides the usual FAQs, it's chock-full of information on lodging, travel, places to go, and things to do. Unlike commercial travel sites, this one's not stingy when it comes to linking outside sources: Thousands of them are spread throughout literally hundreds of useful pages. If you don't find what you need there, check out the rec.travel.* newsgroup archives. And it's all searchable. For its friendliness and its depth, this is one of the best sites I've seen all year. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Southwest Adventures

http://animas.frontier.net/~swadv/

Does the thought of ice climbing appeal to you? How about mountain kayaking?

Interested in experiencing the high mountains of the West? Here's a site devoted to serving you.

These activities are the purview of Southwest Adventures, a Colorado firm that arranges outings for those sports

which "can only be enjoyed in the high mountains." Its products and recommendations are described in exquisite detail, and links connect you to sites and newsgroups of interest to the rugged soul. Despite occasional misspellings, annoying blink tags, and naive page design, Southwest Adventures' site does a good job of bringing its offerings to the net. Durango, ho! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Southwest Airlines Home Gate

http://www.iflyswa.com/

Southwest Airlines is famous for having the funniest "hold" messages in the travel business: Once when I called, I heard, "If you have a touch-tone phone, press eight. It won't make us respond faster, but it'll make you feel better." Its home page has the same sort of small-company irreverence: How many corporate sites do you know of that feature a cartoon flight gate as their main interface? Click on the cash register, and you find ticket information; click on the wall map, and learn about the amenities at Southwest's home airports; click on the company president's photo, and you

A love of flying and homey humor infuse this airline's site.

get... well, you get the photo. Fun and informative. What more could you want? —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Tom's Virtual Vacation

http://tjwww.stanford.edu/vacation/

This is the singular account of two dudes' collective odyssey across these great United States — complete with an image map that allows you to easily track their 10-day trip. "Odyssey" may be too strong a word to use, considering that the duo's obstacles were problems like trying to find a motel room for the night. I'm afraid the writing is dull and witless— umm, I mean technically oriented. You'll find a lot of thrilling information on interstate highways. —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Travel Source

http://www.travelsource.com/

Travel guides are popping up all over the Web, each promising to be the biggest, best, or otherwise most superlative. Travel Source is no different. This commercial collection of links is supposedly "The Internet's First Interactive Travel Guide." At first, it seems that its pioneerism has given Travel Source time to build quite a content base, but beneath the 35 categories of travel information (from Wine Tours to Yacht Charters), there are typically fewer than three links per category. Still, what is there is reasonably diverse and interesting, even if it paints an incomplete view of the wide world of travel options. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Travel Weekly

http://www.traveler.net/

Is this a commercial site, or just the work of some travel agents with too much time on their hands? The confusion stems from the fact that 1) it's really, really well done; 2) it's sponsored by a travel industry magazine; 3) you'll find no ads, and 4) it features fun, sometimes sarcastic writing. So, what's to dis-

Absolutely a gigantic set of travel links make this site rock.

like? The site's accessibility, that's what. Several visits on two separate days brought up the "this server isn't accepting any more connections" message. Clearly, demand has outstripped supply. If you can get through, though, you'll find the biggest set of travel links around. If they'd fix a few links and beef up the server, this site would rock. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Turtle Expedition

http://www.4x44u.com/pub/k2/am4x44u/whats_new/turtle.htm

This is the fairly interesting, ongoing reportage of a couple's road trip across Russia. Our protagonists have, for the last 20 years, driven beefy trucks through the world's most remote regions. Reports of their trips have regu-

Most of the site creators' travels are accomplished via this Ford F-350 four-wheel drive truck.

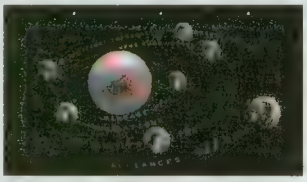
larly appeared in *4x4 Magazine*, and now the Russia trip is accessible online. As of this writing, the last update to their trip was from October. Did Russia conquer this intrepid couple? —*WKC*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

United Airlines

http://www.ual.com/

Fly the friendly skies with a friendly Web site. Cliche? Yes. True? Yes. United indeed has a wonderful Web site for all



United Airlines give you info on flights and reservations, plus travel tips.

levels of browser capability. Since I'm running on a T1, I opted for high-capability, and it was well worth it — pretty layouts and creative ideas abound. Load up with flight schedules and travel tips, read the Mileage Plus newsletter, and find out what the United employee-owners have to say. Good stuff. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Visit to Nepal

http://enigma.phys.utk.edu/~syost/nepal.html

If you're planning a tour of Nepal, visit this site before your departure. It's an outstanding documentary of a one-month trip, and includes an expenses run-down, guide book info, a 70-page travel journal, and dozens of photographs with accompanying text. The overall layout is dry — standard Netscape gray and prehistoric icon buttons. Still, given the breadth of content, this is a wonderful site. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

Walt Disney World

http://www.travelweb.com/thisco/wdw/wdwhome/wdw.html

If you know Disney, you know that everything it publishes is the epitome of advertising hyperbole. Here you'll find the Web version: clean graphics, professional (albeit vapid) copy writing, and endless superlatives, all leveraging the highly bankable images of Mickey Mouse and Pocahoozits. In keeping with Disney's vision of a perfectly controlled universe, there are no — count them, zero! — external links. It's like visiting the Disney parks: a nightmare of grinning cartoon characters, shiny buildings, clean streets, and no way out. Stay in line, please. Children below this height will not be allowed on this ride. You will be assimilated. Have a nice day. —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Web Travel Review

http://webtravel.org/webtravel/

Philip Greenspun offers a good deal more than a "we-went-here-and-we-did-this" report: There are travel tips, colorful photos, side stories — like the fascinating tale of a criminal auto repair shop — and lots of downright good writing. In the end, that's what sets this site apart from other, more self-indulgent travelogues: The professional level of the text and photos makes this site a special, moving experience. But what's this guy doing studying artificial intelligence at MIT? *Condé Nast*, sign him up! —*TG*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

vanity

Bepler's Home on Whidbey

http://www.whidbey.net/~bepler/

The Beplers are married graphic designers who live on an island somewhere, designing their little hearts away. And it shows. This site is nicely designed: colorful, easy to navigate, and just plain good-looking. From their home page, you can

The Beplers, who live on Whidbey Island in Northwest Washington state, share more than you may want to know about themselves and their lives.

learn all about them, their families, their island, and their work. The only problem is that the information is on the skimpy side. What do they like? What *are* they like? I want more. The site is more than just a home page, it's an online family. Unfortunately, they come off as the boring kind of family that never goes home after the barbeque. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Chris and Kori's

http://www.flnet.com/~ck1/

Chris and Kori are the drippiest couple in Sarasota, FL, and perhaps do more damage to their town's fine reputation than a frisky Pee Wee Herman could ever hope to. They live with two "adorable" cats, drive a nifty Honda and a sporty Mercury Cougar, and like listening to bad stadium rock. Imagine all this information at your fingertips. The latest Chris-and-Kori news at press time is that they're getting married. Ugh. And to think Sarasota was such a nice town. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Countdown to Scott's Web Page of Funkiness

http://www.li.net/~gpollack/

Scott's the funkiest 9th grader around, and he knows the Web well. His home page comes in a variety of flavors, servicing browsers from the mightiest Netscape to the lowliest Lynx. This site mainly consists of links to other places, and is peppered with cute, but not very funky, cartoons. He's got a comprehensive list of martial arts sites, gaming sites, and sound sample sites. If, one day, Scott launches into the shameless self-promotion common to vanity pages, I won't hold it against him. He knows taekwondoe, and could probably kick my ass. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Edge of CyberSpace

http://www.europa.com/~edge/

This is a big home page. There are some

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

Don't miss this site's Underground section, an area of instability, "oblique obscurities, and virtual viscosity."

wonderful graphics, but they're heavy, and take a while to load. There are mounds of links, and while they're not organized, it's nice to see them woven into original content. And that is the key phrase that elevates this site — original content. A lot of time has gone into making this home page different from the standard link list and resume online bit, and for that, it's worth a few peeks. It has a left-leaning, young perspective, with info on the state of Oregon, tons of Internet tips, and a few extra goodies that I'll keep secret. —*LS*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Jie's Homepage!

http://www.mit.edu.8001/afs/athena.mit.edu.user/w/o/wonder/www/home.html

Jie is getting her doctorate in chemistry at MIT. Previously, she attended Stanford, as well as schools in her native China. In spite of being a serious overachiever, Jie presents an attractive and friendly vanity page, with interesting links to sites on science, China, and *People* magazine — which demonstrates Jie has *some* kind of life away from the academic grindstone. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

La Home Page de Mario Contreras

http://rampages.onramp.net/~poohbah/

Mario Contreras' good design sense, coupled with some amusing content, makes for a pretty decent site. There's a picture of Mario posing with friends, a gallery of artsy photos, and a bit about Mario's work. Depending on who you are, you will either find the Babe of the Week section to be the best or the most offensive part of the site, as Mario is highlighting chicks from the net. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

NoLan W3

http://www.hooked.net/users/nolanm/

NoLan consists of a big image map that links to sites I presume the author's interested in: law, education, art, Web

This site's Escher fetish is its most distinguishing attribute.

stuff, computer shenanigans — links o' plenty. Besides indicating an M.C. Escher fetish, the site doesn't have much to distinguish it from other such pages with sets of links. Sometimes, I think one could spend days on the Web linking between link pages. Link after link after link. Try adding a little content. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

Riot Page

http://www.primenet.com/~bandd/riot/

Originally reviewed in the December issue of *The Net*, the Riot Page has undergone an evolution. The site still rocks (it got an A before, and maintains that grade), but has new features, some snazzy HTML tricks, and fresh new content. The site creator's voice still rings with grrrl flair, and her link lists are growing quickly and impressively. The best new service: Meet her friends, and maybe get a date. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Slade's WWWorld

http://www.midwest.net/scribers/esh/index.htm

Slade's a guy who likes to chat. On his home page, you'll find links to all sorts of chatty lands in which to fritter away your time. He's also put together a mildly interesting Almanac page, which links to a bunch of ever-changing resources, like the weather, news of the weird, and comics. There are links to major rock bands, links to computing stuff, and a million bonus links presented in no particular order that may or may not interest Slade. Slade knows how to put together a good-looking page, but can't seem to decide what to put on it. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Spooky PEZ

http://redwood.northcoast.com/~shojo/PEZ/pez.html

WARNING! PEZ aren't the lovable li'l icons people make them out to be. In

Amid the joy created by PEZ is something disturbing, this page laments.

fact, they are the most evil candy on the market today. The Spooky Pez Page was created to expose this child-damning conspiracy, and to save millions of unsuspecting tykes. Can't you see the Evil Skull Dispenser laughing at YOU? Anyone with children should heed these warnings. Be sure to catch the letters section, which is filled with the ignorant pleas of PEZ defenders. They're just min-

First Brian of 96

http://streams.com:80/brian/

The Life of Brian. Yes. A song, or a play, or a movie laced with melodrama and creativity. The Life of Brian. The site is small, and it's not a glorious manifestation of HTML wizardry. Don't get me wrong, it's extremely nice to look at. Smooth, clean, and fresh. But Brian isn't about barraging us with spectacle-like images of neon blisters, and radiant blasters. No blinks. No trash. Brian's is a different sort of home page. It loads up looking the way you might expect an e-zine to look. The dateline: Year 2/Version 1. And first on Brian's list is, in fact, Brian. He won't tell you what his favorite colors are, or why he's built a home page for the Web. He doesn't want to show you pictures of his pet poodle, either. Instead, Brian captivates up with Weekly Cycles, a regularly updated story-essay-idea that spans a few pages of insightful and intelligent thought. He's a wonderful writer with wonderful tales to tell. There is an archive of past Weekly Cycles, and I recommend reading them.

There's also a fantastic interview with graphic artists-photocopy zine extraordinaire Michael Diana, who has been dealing with censorship issues of his work for the last few years. The most disturbing incident occurred when Michael was arrested as a suspect to a murder in Florida because his comics depict graphically violent themes. (He says they're "influenced by television and radio.") After the arrest, various political officials told him to "not publish [the] gross comic." The interview is accompanied by a few downloadable video clips of the meeting between Michael and Brian, and links to various freedom of speech organizations.

For the interactive "fun" component, Brian has a snazzy CGI script asking people to document why their lives are pathetic. Some of the posts are entertaining, and some have nothing to do with patheticness.

Brian is also responsible for the infamous Piercing Mildred site. You get to pierce a cartoon Mildred (or bonus other characters), scar them with your own design, or heal infections. There are contests with outstanding prizes — like the infamous Wicker Park Jumping Spider or a rubber fish, and so on and so on. Humor. Entertainment. A flurry of creativity.

Brian stole my heart. —*SK*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

ions of Satan. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Crispen Family

http://hiwaay.net/~crispen/

Bob Crispen is an aerospace research guy who publishes a page on his nuclear family. Bob, along with Kelly, Patrick, Robert, and the lovable FoxyToo, post pages listing the stuff they do, and the things they like. Then there is, of course, the huge, *huge* set of links. I wouldn't be surprised if a sizable chunk of the Internet is listed on here. The Crispens are a surprisingly wired family, except perhaps for FoxyToo, who I think is probably too busy fretting in the shadow of Foxy the First to hammer out a page of its own. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The T.W.I.N.K.I.E.S Project

http://www.rice.edu/~gouge/twinkies.html

What could a bunch of college students do with an assortment of "scientific" equipment, and a batch of tasty polymer-based snack cakes during finals week? Answer: Subject them to a series of rigorous tests, and post the results on the Web for the scientific community to see. Who has time to study when the mysteries of the universe remain locked in a creamy Twinkie? Witness the rapid oxidation test (lighting it on fire); the soluability test (dunking it in water); the

Did you know that "Twinkies" stands for "Tests With Inorganic Noxious Kakes In Extreme Situations." Find out more here.

density test (whipping it up in a blender); and others. Locked inside each cake is an engineering marvel that could change the world as we know it! —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Toolman

http://www.holli.com/~toolman/nettool.html

If you like woodworking, power tools, or the men that use them, this site is worth a look. Like any good personal page, you get a sense of who Toolman is, what he likes and hates, and what he thinks about. In his Woodworking area, you can learn about how to put together shelves and things, and about the tools you'll need to do it. Did you know that there are IRC channels on which you can discuss beltsanding? Besides tools, the creator lists a recipe for his fave meatloaf, posts a picture of his wife, and has a set of links relating to his ultimate power tool, the computer. I just wouldn't try to plane a board with it. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **B-**

Virtuality's Webspace

http://www.dnai.com/~virt/

Virtuality combines professional design, first-class artwork, and a dry sense of humor to create a personal page that looks like it's from a big organization. J. Robinson's bio is the right way to do a resume on the Web. It looks good, and has all the pertinent information. It's entertaining, too. The requisite page of links is enhanced by a set of small photos of the linkees. Not everyone can produce pages like this, but you may get some good ideas during a quick visit. —*MP*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Welcome to Witsend

http://www.catt.ncsu.edu/~witsend

Scott Graham Parkerson is a 22-year-old computer science major — no, really? — at North Carolina State University. He likes anagrams and dislikes Bill Gates. By his photo, he appears to be an all-around fine fellow. Based on his page, if 20 or so years ago I'd gotten married and had a baby, and that baby was a girl who grew up and met Scott, and Scott asked her out for this Saturday night, and she wanted to go, I'd give my consent just as long as he promised to keep the anagrams clean, and get her home before midnight. Which I'm sure he would. —*RKR*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

web tech

Experience Power Design

http://www.libertynet.org:80/~power/

Experience eye-popping graphics — literally — on the Power Design Web site. This design company creates Web sites for TV stations, national magazines, and even a football club. Learn how to redesign a national magazine in two weeks. Read notes from a seminar on the importance of unique Web site design. Power Design is one interesting company that's striving to make the Web more wacky and witty. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **B**

The Common Gateway Interface

http://hoohoo.ncsa.uiuc.edu/cgi/

Enter The Common Gateway Interface (CGI) site for useful information on this standard for external gateway programs to interface with HTTP servers. A plain HTML document that the Web daemon retrieves is static (which means it is a text file that doesn't change); by contrast, a CGI program is executed in real-time, outputting dynamic information. The site explains this concept further, and gives examples of CGI forms and other functions. It's a crucial bookmark for both beginning and advanced HTML programmers. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

The El-Cheapo Web Page

http://www.oanet.com/homepage/darryls/cheapo.htm

Thrifty would-be Web site designers have an online muse called The El-Cheapo Web Page. Here you can learn where to go for free Web page space, cheap HTML software, and copyright-free graphics. El-Cheapo has links galore to other pages that offer help in building a Web site from scratch or adding snazzy features to one already established. The site itself could prosper from its own advice by showing off more graphics and CGI scripts, but it seems the Web master wants visitors to learn, not necessarily to be entertained. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:*

VRML

http://www.newtype.com/NewType/vr/index.htm

Virtually everyone wants to learn more about the Virtual Reality Modeling Language, or VRML. Thanks to this

The graphics are a delight here, not surprising for a VRML-focused site.

graphically savvy Web site, VRML promises to be the next cool thing on the net. Read about VRML browsers, industry news, projects, outside sites, specific hardware, and software. Build a VRML world of your very own with help from downloadable software and various Internet tools. The VRML Web site design is classy, polished, and eager to amaze visitors. Even surfers with short attention spans will appreciate the sections on VRML art and arcade games. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **A**

Web Weavers Warren

http://fox.nstn.ca/~tmonk/weaver/weaver.html

Web Weavers Warren warrants a big wet kiss for supplying creative professionals with wall-to-wall links on Web design. Follow links to sites specializing in Web backgrounds, browsers, CGI, counters, editors, HTML, icons, image maps, newsgroups, Perl programming, SGML, style, utilities, VRML, and more. Web Weavers Warren could use more graphics, but most visitors will bookmark this site as a useful reference link anyway. —*BJB*

net rating: *overall:* **C**

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Rich in content	A visual 10!	Rocket science material
Fair amount of content	Appealing, not great	Not stupid
Needs more content	A dog	Needs a brain

The Blue Page Web Site Reviewers

BB: Brian Bearden is a computer science student and astronomy staff member at the University of Texas who's trying not to be driven off the brink of madness by the hate and confusion of the world. He can be reached at pepe@mail.utexas.edu.

BJB: Bonnie J. Burton (burtonb@ucsu.Colorado.EDU), 23, is a geek girl who writes articles on computer culture and designs WWW sites to pay rent, has more e-mail friends than real ones, and thinks Bettie Page should run for president. Her Shameless Self-Promotion Page hides at: http://ucsu.Colorado.EDU/~burtonb/Home.html.

KB: Ken Bousquet (bousquet@thenet-usa.com), when not hanging 10 on our T1, imagines hit'n the lip in super-smooth style in the heavy water near his place at Ocean Beach.

JP: Jon Phillips (jon@thenet-usa.com), *The Net*'s Managing Editor, is more afraid of you than are you of him.

KV: Karina Vasser has been curiously displaced from her existential clique in Paris, 1950, though she finds the counter-culture of San Francisco 1996 equally inspiring.

KW: Karen Wickre has co-authored *Atlas to the World Wide Web* (Ziff-Davis Press, 1995), edited *Guide to Netscape Navigator* (ZD Press, 1996), and contributed to *Yahoo Unplugged* (IDG Books, 1995). Despite all of this, she is able to remember life before the Web. You can reach her at Kwickre@aol.com.

LG: Lauren Guzak, *The Net*'s CD-ROM editor (guzak@thenet-usa.com), plans a hostile takeover of the world once she gets her life in order.

LS: Lydia Schwartz serves as the East Coast Correspondent of *The Net*. She holds a degree in computer science and can be found on any given day jogging across the Brooklyn Bridge with her golden retriever, Doom.

MP: Matt Patterson (DrBubonic@aol.com) lives in Los Angeles and is currently paid to make screw catalogs. Read his magazine, Ooze, at http://www.io.com/~ooze.

RKR: Reed K. Rahlman (rkr@well.com) has written a number of dark comedies, which, in the best comic traditions, have some combination of blood, con artists, and two headed babies. He welcomes your comments on his reviews, but don't expect him to answer.

SK: Shel Kimen (shel@thenet-usa.com) is trouble. (And Associate Editor of *The Net*.)

SS: Steve Szyszko is a sysadmin/Web master who, not surprisingly, is extremely skeptical of any promises made about the Internet. He shoots a great deal of pool, has no pets, and adores Gore Vidal. Reach him at szyszko@mail.utexas.edu.

TG: Tom Geller (TGeller@aol.com) is a San Francisco-based writer who has used online services since 1986. He has no bodily warts.

WC: *The Net*'s Associate Editor Wayne Cunningham (wcunning@thenet-usa.com) is afflicted with the postmodern condition. He grafts areas of human endeavor together at will, and is happy practicing such modern anomalies as infotainment and imagineering.

C·A·N·D·Y·L·A·N·D

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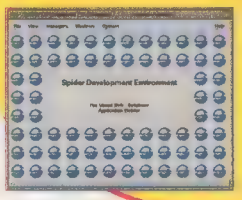

For NT

$895 Get Interactive With Discussion Groups From net.Thread!

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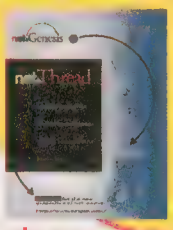

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RECREATION and TRAVEL

Adventure Shop
http://www.ashop.com/
Link after link of companies that offer structured outdoor fun.

AMI News — Skiing
http://www.omix.com/ami/ski/
Links to resorts, weather, racing, and sundry articles about snow skiing. Includes interactive chat.

Bass Fishing Homepage
http://wmi.cais.com/bassfish/index.htm
Lure ratings, equipment listings, and fish tales, all focused on catching the noble bass.

The Blue Marlin Web
http://www.igc.net/~ccruz/

A rating of various fishing areas, and news on the likelihood of finding the elusive blue marlin.

Death Valley Tourist Information
http://www1.ridgecrest.ca.us/~matmus/DeathV.html
Directions on how to get there, and how to survive the 80-degree temperature differentials.

The Eddyline Echo
http://www.channel1.com/users/scott/
Covers kayaking, canoeing, and rafting, with sections on competition and clubs.

Great Outdoor Recreation Pages
http://www.gorp.com/
A huge listing of myriad pages concerned with the great outdoors. Includes links to National Parks, as well as non-U.S. info.

Hiking and Walking Homepage
http://www.teleport.com/~walking/hiking.html
Weekly articles on hiking and walking, covering equipment and trails. Put one foot in front of the other.

Hunter's Hangout
http://dialin.ind.net/~dburton/hunting.html
Tons of information on all kinds of hunting. Includes a monthly contest and classifieds.

National Park Service
http://www.nps.gov/
Ever wondered why the U.S. attracts so many tourists? Because its national parks are true international treasures. Read this page before packing the Winnebago.

Marinedata
http://www.marinedata.co.uk/start.html
A database full of technical information on power and sail boats. British proprietors give this site an Atlantic bias.

Outdoor Action
http://www.princeton.edu/~rcurtis/oa.html
An overview of outdoor sports like climbing, paddling, and hiking. Pay attention to those safety instructions!

Outdoors Open
http://zeus.javanet.com/openout/
This national tour guide service will help you arrange camping, fishing and skiing vacations.

Resort Sports Network
http://www.rsn.com/

Snow Skiing is the focus, but this site includes stuff on mountain biking and inline skating. Up-to-date snow reports.

Rob Mac's Falconry Homepage
http://justice.loyola.edu/~rmcilhar/falconry/falconry.html
A nice, content-filled site about the sport of falconry — what it is and where you can do it.

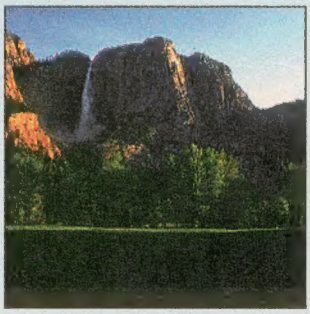
Sail Online
http://www.isail.com/

Resources for sailors. From novices to competitive racers, this site is a hub for wind-driven fun.

Speleology Server Homepage
http://speleology.cs.yale.edu/
Outdoors and underground, this site offers pages about caving equipment, pictures, and newsletters.

United States Parachute Association
http://home.worldweb.net/USPA/
Training information, publications, and clubs for people who jump out of airplanes.

Yosemite
http://www.euronet.nl/users/frankhen/NPCaTour.html



The photos on this illustrated online tour beat those found on the National Parks Service site.

CONSERVATION

Bat Conservation
http://www.batcon.org/index.html
Bats contribute much more to our ecology than we may think.

Conservation in Shangri La
http://aleph0.clarku.edu/~rajs/parks.html
Explore Nepal, home of Asia's rarest wildlife. Get info on parks and reservations, and the animals that live there.

Creating Land Trusts
http://www.possibility.com/LandTrust/
Another site that ain't the spiffiest of Web creations, but an outstanding jump-point leading to pages and pages of Land Trust info.

Ecology Channel
http://www.ecology.com/

Snazzy graphics, news, a species-in-danger section, and a super-cool Eco-Kids section. For the young and aware.

EcoNet @IGC
http://www.econet.apc.org/econet/
Probably the most informative first stop for eco-related issues and networking. An outstanding site.

Eco News Africa
http://www.web.apc.org/~econews/
Way too much ASCII, but nonetheless an extremely interesting resource.

Environet
http://www.aspenlinx.com/environet/
Follow garbage dumping issues in Santa Clarita California's Elsmere Canyon. Small, but an interesting use of Web technology.

Illinois Natural Resources Information Network
http://dnr.state.il.us/

Graphics, links, legal info, current issues, recreation, and anything else an eco-avenger in Illinois might desire.

Indian Ocean Conservation Project
http://www.neaq.org/CON/con.io.html
Articles, news, conservation strategies, and a cool-looking map of the Indian ocean.

International Bulldozer Blockade
http://www.hookup.net/~claytons/

Updated regularly, this site will tell you where bulldozers are planning to plow next. Nice front graphic.

Leave No Trace
http://www.nols.edu/LNT/LNTHome
Helping to promote land stewardship, minimum-impact skills, and wilderness ethics.

Peregrine Fund
http://www.peregrinefund.org/
The World Center for birds of prey. Links, resources, events, and data sheets.

USDA Forest Services National Headquarters
http://www.fs.fed.us/
Research, legal issues, caring for the land, and a public forum are only a fraction of the offerings. A nice, big site.

US Environmental Protection Agency
http://www.epa.gov/
You'll find good, basic info on the EPA and its many offshoots.

World Conservation Monitoring Center
http://www.wcmc.org.uk/

Jam-packed with info, links, essays, and news about conservation issues. ■

THE SEARCH IS ONLINE

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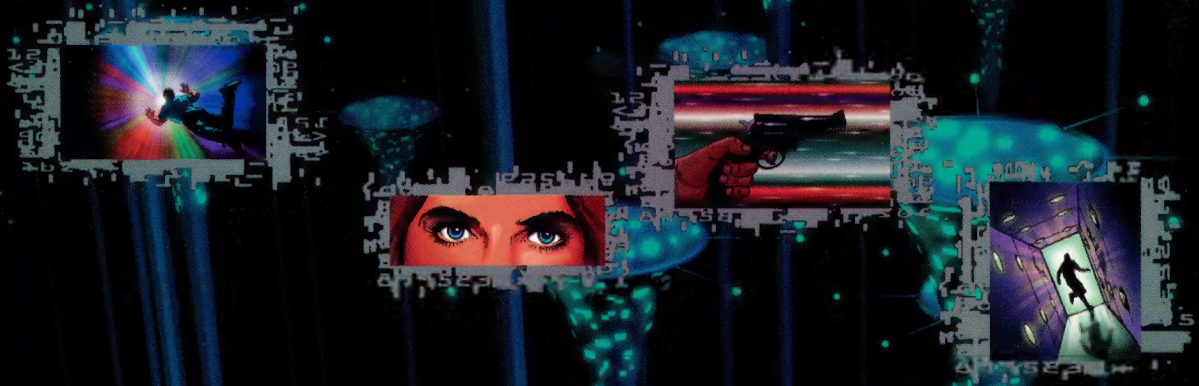

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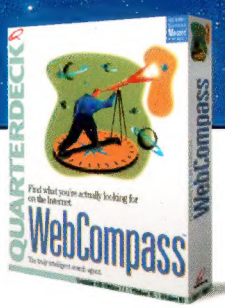

The Internet has taken off so fast that it's impossible for any one person – or search engine – to help you find what you're looking for.

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Now the magic. WebCompass then uses advanced language processing to turn the data into usable information by classifying it into logical categories. Only then does it present your results, summarized and ranked in order of relevance to you. All in just moments.

You can also set WebCompass to go out automatically at regular intervals (say, each day) and bring back news of topical interest to you (say, your competitor's stock price). It's like having a personal assistant who spends 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, surfing the Net for you, bringing back just the good stuff.

WebCompass works with all popular browsers including Netscape Navigator, Microsoft Internet Explorer and Quarterdeck Mosaic™. And with no special search fees involved.

To find out more, search out www.quarterdeck.com or call 1-800-683-6696. It will make a world of difference in the way you use the Internet.

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